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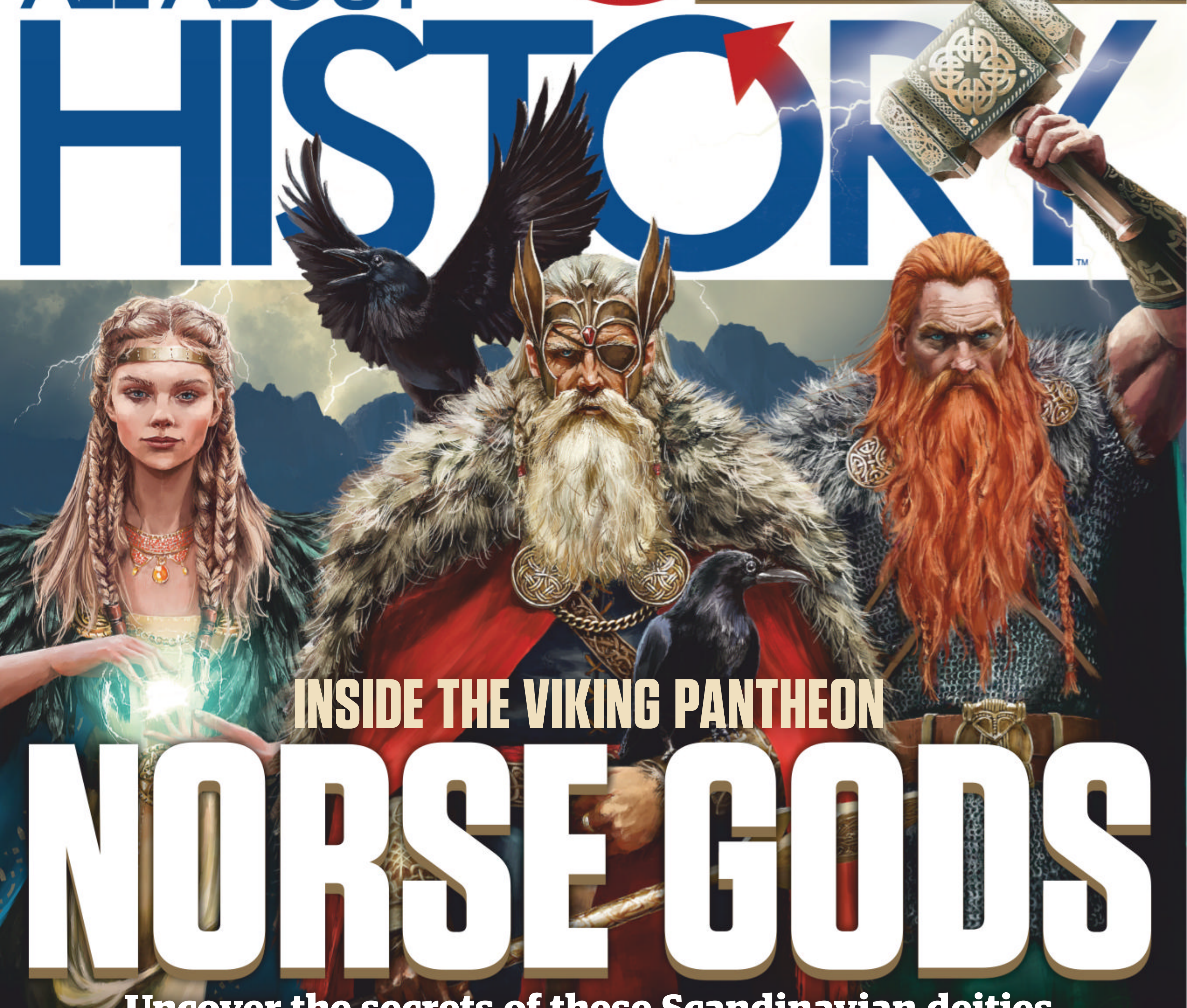

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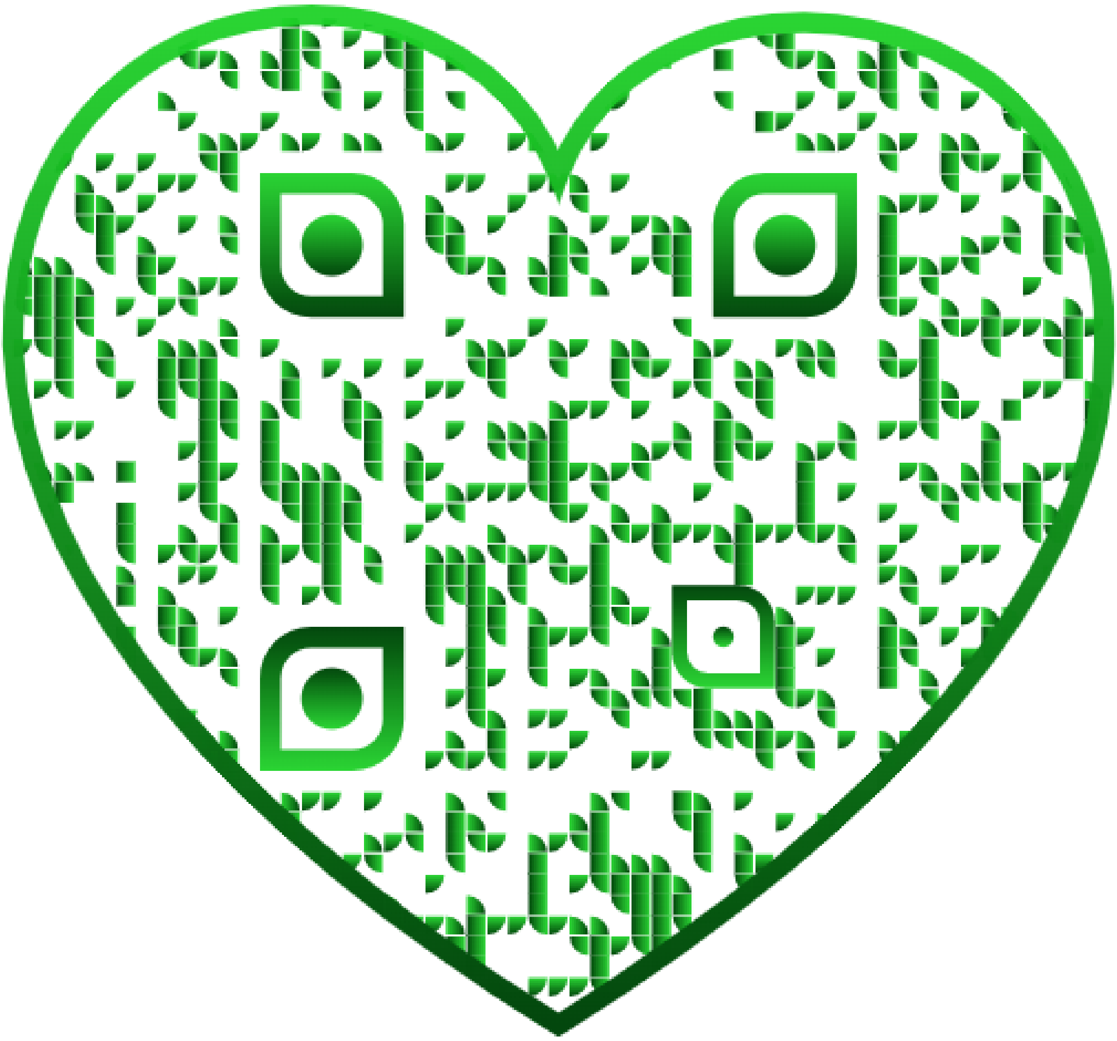

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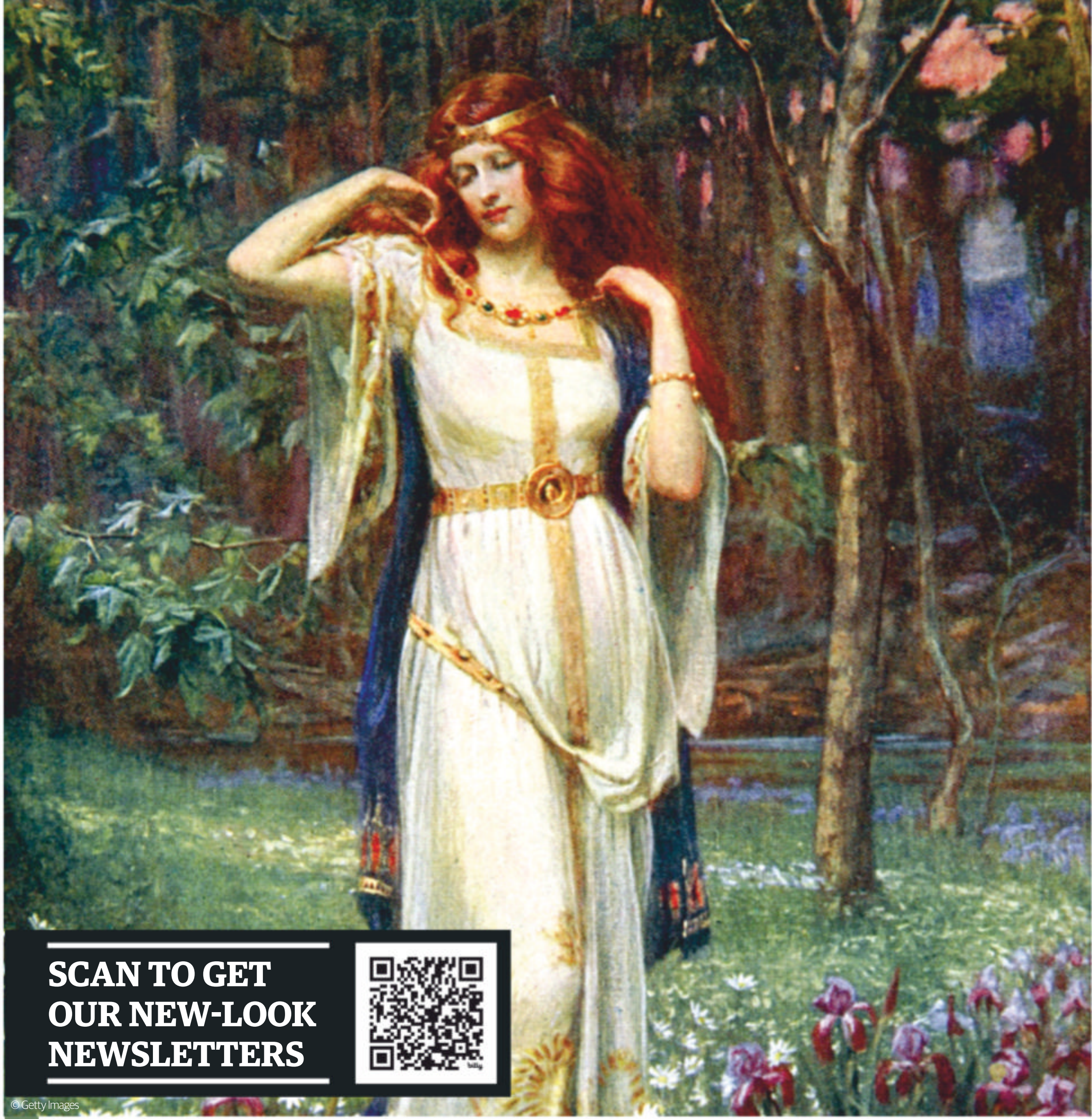

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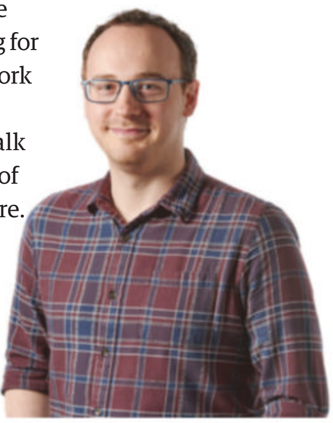
A classic image of Freyja from *Teutonic Myths and Legends* by Donald A Mackenzie

Welcome

When I say that the Norse myths have been massively influential on the modern world, I don't just mean getting to watch Chris Hemsworth swing a hammer around. Famously, JRR Tolkien drew heavily from these classic tales and the gods involved for his creation of Middle-earth, for example. Then there's the more direct adaptations like the powers of Loki being given to Jim Carrey in *The Mask* or (for gamers among you) the many things named from these myths in the *Halo* videogame series. And how many children are called Freyja these days?

So, the Norse pantheon are a significant bunch and this issue we wanted to dig into their stories, where they came from and how they influenced the people who believed in them, much as we have done with the Greeks and Egyptians before.

We welcome Dr Tom Birkett to be our guide through these tales and their historical significance. You can also learn about the lucha libre legend El Santo, find out how Hiroshima was rebuilt after the A-bomb, go hunting for some lost tombs, work out why codpieces were so popular, walk the historic streets of Paris and much more. I hope you enjoy the issue.



Jonathan Gordon
Editor

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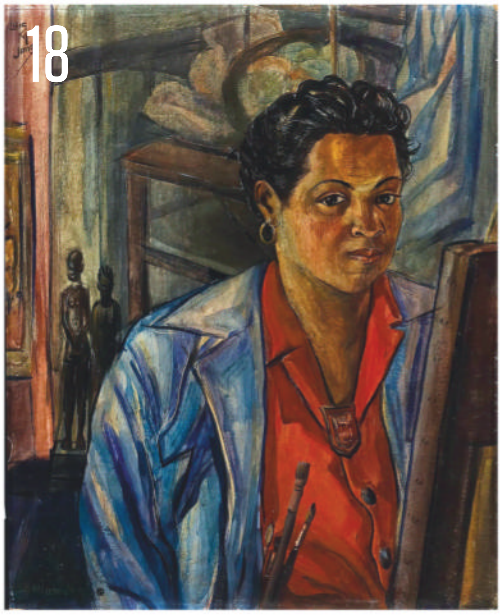
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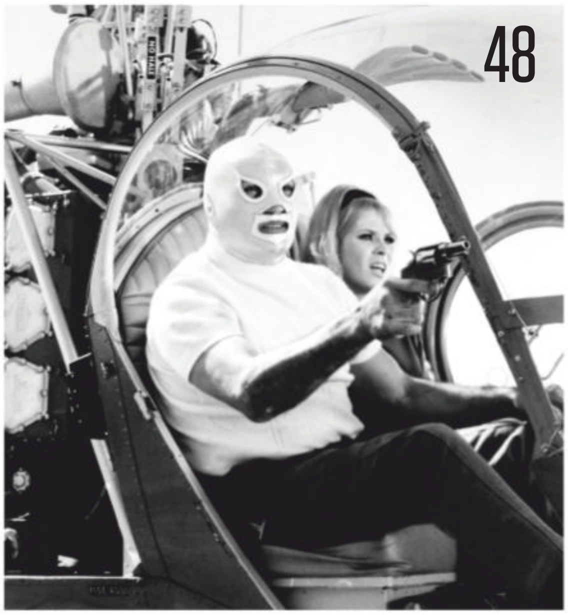
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Defining Moments

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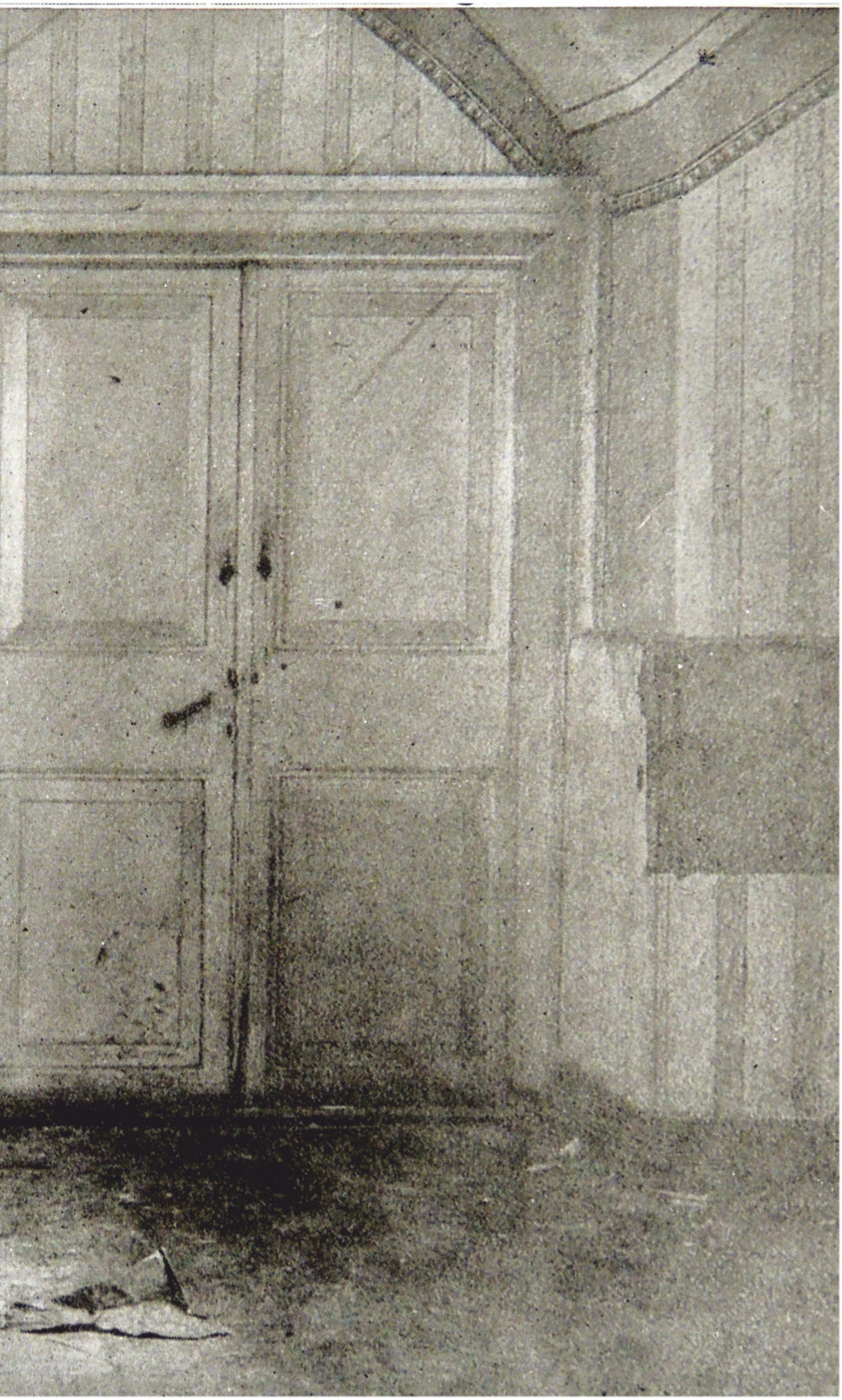

17 July 1918

THE ROMANOV FAMILY ARE KILLED

Following the February Revolution of 1917, Tsar Nicholas II was deposed as Emperor of Russia and he and his family were placed under house arrest. By May 1918, the new Bolshevik government had moved Nicholas, his wife Alexandra and their five children – Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia and Alexei – to the Ipatiev House in Yekaterinburg. There, in the early hours of 17 July 1918, the Romanov imperial family and their entourage were taken to the basement, where they were shot and bayoneted. This photograph shows the holes in the wall made by investigators as they searched for the bullets.

7 August 1974

TWIN TOWERS TIGHTROPE ACT

French performance artist Philippe Petit made headlines in the early hours of 7 August 1974 when he walked back and forth across a high wire suspended between the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. The feat, dubbed "the artistic crime of the century", had taken six years of planning, beginning in 1968 when Petit had first seen a sketch of the proposed towers. With his accomplices, he smuggled in the equipment needed to set up the wire the night before. After 45 minutes of balancing at a height of just over 415m he was arrested, but the charges were later dropped.

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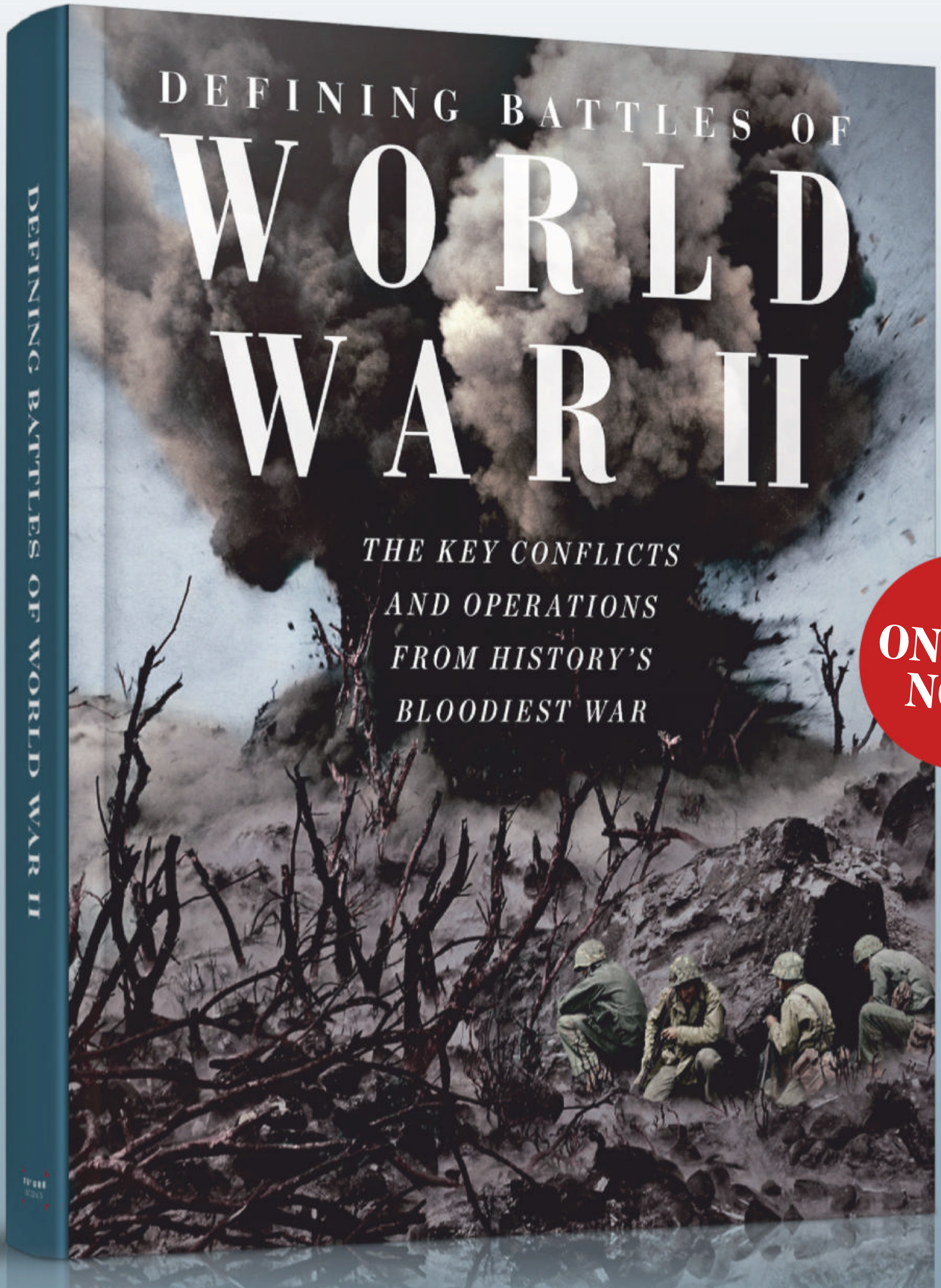
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SCAN ME

ALL ABOUT PARIS

Discover the history of the City of Lights, from its ancient origins to its modern architecture and citizens

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Main image: © Getty Images

Written by Jonathan Gordon, Callum McKelvie, Emily Staniforth

Key Events

1163 NOTRE-DAME CONSTRUCTION

Work begins on building Notre-Dame de Paris, which translates as 'Our Lady of Paris', during the reign of Louis VII of France. The project on the eastern side of the Île de la Cité is completed by 1345.

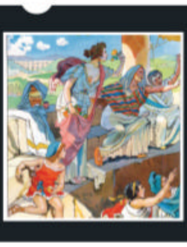
Following the fire that badly damaged it in 2019, Notre-Dame reopened in December 2024.

MAY 1588 DAY OF THE BARRICADES

A popular uprising begins in Paris in support of the Duke of Guise and the Catholic League against Henry III as part of the French Wars of Religion. Streets are blockaded with barrels full of earth and paving stones.

FOUNDING SETTLEMENT
c.250 BCE

A Celtic tribe called the Parisii begin a settlement on the island of Île de la Cité in the Seine River. It's not known by what name they referred to this original community.

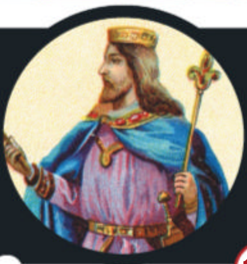


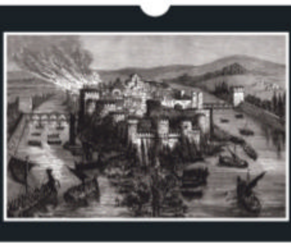
ROMAN CONQUEST
52 BCE

Julius Caesar leads the conquest of Gaul, defeating the Parisii. The town is taken over by the Romans and renamed Lutetia.

CAPITAL CITY 508 CE

Having taken over Paris in 486 CE, Clovis, King of Franks, makes the city the capital of his kingdom, beginning its role as a powerful political centre.





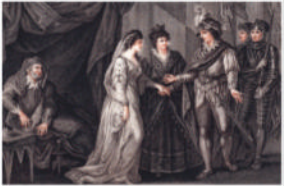
VIKING SIEGES 845

A Viking invasion of West Franks sees Paris besieged and eventually sacked by the invading force, which is repeated again in 885.

1163

LOUVRE CASTLE 1190

A fortress in the heart of Paris is constructed by Philip II to protect the city from English invasion. Louvre Castle goes through many changes in later years.



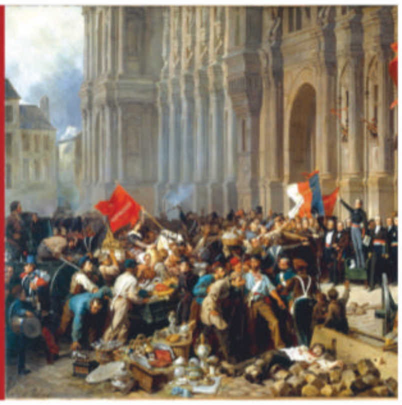
ENGLISH OCCUPATION
21 MAY 1420

The Treaty of Troyes is signed, making Henry V of England the heir to the French throne and seeing English troops move into Paris.

MAY 1588

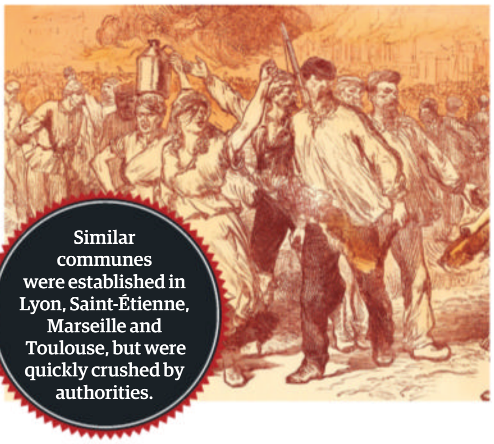
FEB 1848 THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

King Louis Philippe is overthrown by a popular uprising in Paris as economic troubles and political dissolution ends what is known as the July Monarchy. A Second Republic begins, but only lasts until 1851 with Napoleon III proclaiming himself emperor.

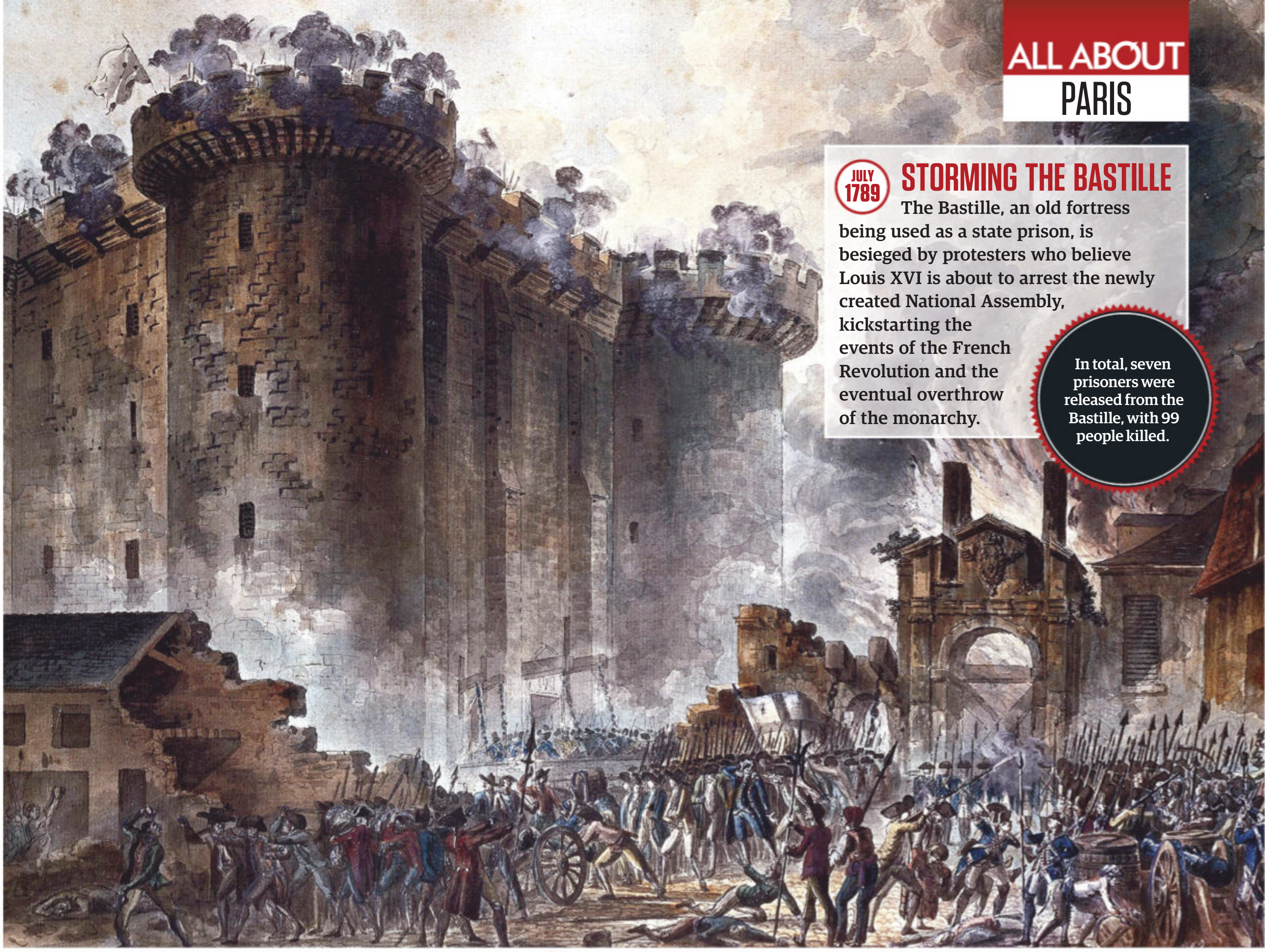


MARCH 1871 PARIS COMMUNE

Refusing the rule of the new National Assembly, those armed to defend Paris during the recent siege lead a rebellion, electing their own government committed to the values of the 1789 revolution. Lasting two months, it is ultimately crushed in a bloody counteroffensive by the national government.



Similar communes were established in Lyon, Saint-Étienne, Marseille and Toulouse, but were quickly crushed by authorities.



JULY 1789 STORMING THE BASTILLE

The Bastille, an old fortress being used as a state prison, is besieged by protesters who believe Louis XVI is about to arrest the newly created National Assembly, kickstarting the events of the French Revolution and the eventual overthrow of the monarchy.

In total, seven prisoners were released from the Bastille, with 99 people killed.

JULY 1789

1848

MARCH 1871

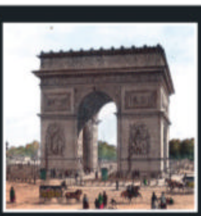
MARCH 1889

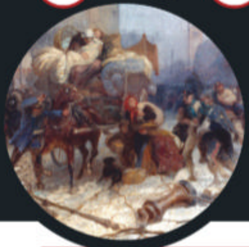
AUG 1944

NAPOLEON'S TRIUMPH

1806

The Arc de Triomphe is commissioned by Napoleon Bonaparte, following his accession as French Emperor, to mark the victories of the French military.





SIEGE OF PARIS

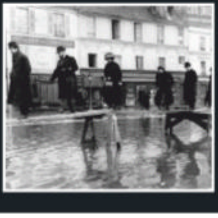
19 SEPTEMBER 1870

Paris is besieged by German forces as the newly formed French republic refuses to agree the peace terms being offered. The siege lasts until January 1871.

FIRST METRO LINE

19 JULY 1900

Metro Line 1 is opened in Paris, connecting eight stations with a further 10 stops added later in the year. It connects Porte Maillot and Porte de Vincennes.



GREAT FLOOD OF PARIS

21 JANUARY 1910

Thousands are evacuated as more than 14,000 buildings are flooded as the River Seine rises 8.62 metres above its normal levels. Wooden walkways are built to aid escape.

GERMANY OCCUPIES PARIS

14 JUNE 1940

Following the evacuation of the French Army from the capital, German forces enter Paris and begin the Nazi occupation of the city during WWII.

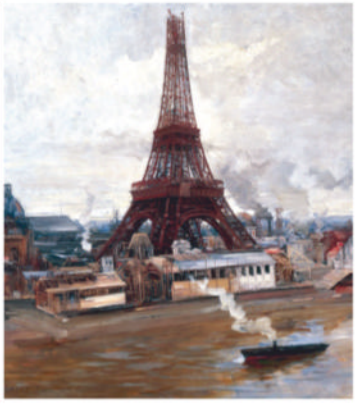
MAI 68 PROTESTS

MAY 1968

In solidarity with a student protest for political reforms, a General Strike is called, with 10 million workers participating. Students and workers take to the streets demanding reform.

MARCH 1889 EIFFEL TOWER

With construction started in 1887, the Eiffel Tower is completed in time for the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution and the 1889 Exposition Universelle. The tower is designed by Gustave Eiffel and considered a marvel of engineering by many, but also an eyesore by some Parisians.



AUG 1944 LIBERATION OF PARIS

After advancing from Normandy, the Allies are bolstered by the citizens of Paris rebelling against German control and enter the city facing limited resistance, finally liberating Paris by 25 August. A Victory Parade is held on 29 August.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

THE LOUVRE

Paris, France
1546 – present

One of the most famous museum institutions in the world, the Louvre is a must-visit destination for anyone travelling to the City of Light. With 35,000 items on display, it holds around 500,000 objects in its wider collection. And with 73,000 square-metres of exhibition space, it's also one of the largest museums in the world.

The Louvre started life as a medieval fortress built towards the end of the 12th century. Designed to defend Paris, the structure was erected by King Philip II and later renovated into a royal castle by Charles V in the 14th century. This incarnation of the building was eventually torn down by Francis I in 1546 and replaced by a newer royal palace: the beginning of the Louvre as it is today.

The Renaissance-style palace built by Francis I only makes up a small portion of the floorplan of the Louvre, and much of the institution was added to, bit by bit, by subsequent French monarchs as they continued the expansion of the palace. Francis was also responsible for the first collection of artworks held at the Louvre, with many of the original works he acquired – such as the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci – still making up some of the museum's huge collection. This core catalogue was also added to by later kings and queens until the fall of the French monarchy in 1792. A year later, the Louvre was opened as a public museum by the revolutionary government.

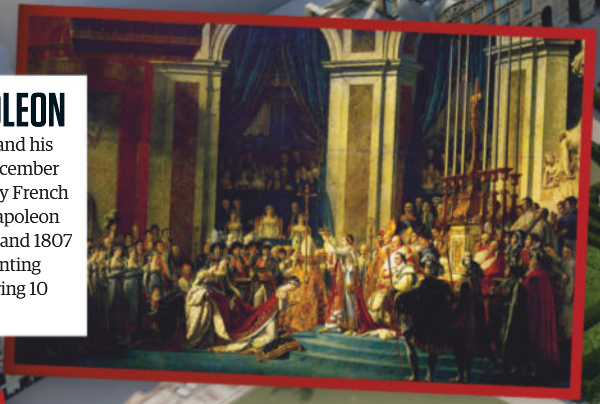
The distinctive glass pyramid that serves as the museum's entrance was added in 1989, welcoming nearly nine million visitors every year.

2 VENUS DE MILO

One of a trinity of the Louvre's great ladies (the other two are the *Mona Lisa* and the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*), the *Venus de Milo* is arguably the most recognisable statue in the collection. Discovered on the Greek island of Melos in 1820, it was acquired by Louis XVIII and subsequently donated to the Louvre. Dating to around 150 BCE, the *Venus de Milo* is believed to depict the goddess Aphrodite.

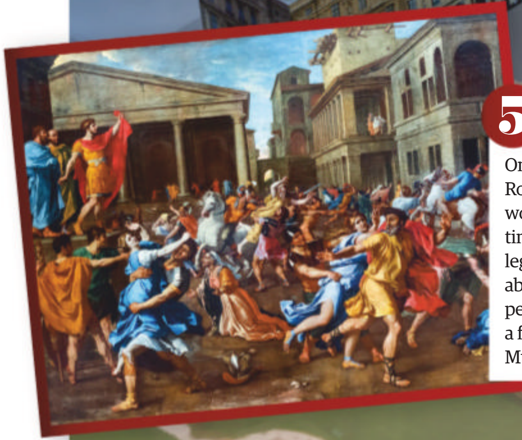
3 WINGED VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE

One of the Louvre's most imposing ancient statues, the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* stands on the Daru staircase watching over the museum's visitors. The statue of the Greek goddess Nike has been on display at the Louvre since 1866, when it was brought to France by Charles Champoiseau, who had discovered the magnificent figure during excavations on the Greek island of Samothrace. Sadly, Nike's head and arms have never been uncovered, and parts of her impressive wings have been restored using plaster.



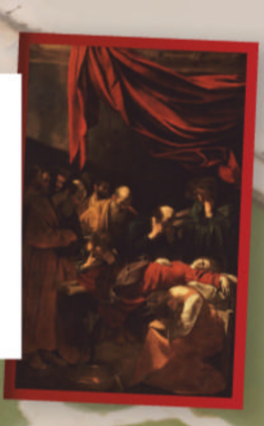
4 THE CORONATION OF NAPOLEON

Depicting the crowning of Napoleon Bonaparte and his wife Joséphine at Notre-Dame cathedral on 2 December 1804, *The Coronation of Napoleon* was painted by French artist Jacques-Louis David. Commissioned by Napoleon himself, the work was completed between 1805 and 1807 and shows the grandeur of the occasion. The painting is one of the largest works in the Louvre, measuring 10 metres wide and six metres high.



5 RAPE OF THE SABINE WOMEN

One of two Nicolas Poussin paintings depicting the Roman legend of the rape of the Sabine women, this work was painted by the French artist in Rome some time between 1637 and 1638. The scene shows the legendary founder of the city, Romulus, ordering the abduction of women from the neighbouring Sabine people. The painting's earlier version, completed a few years before, is part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection in New York.

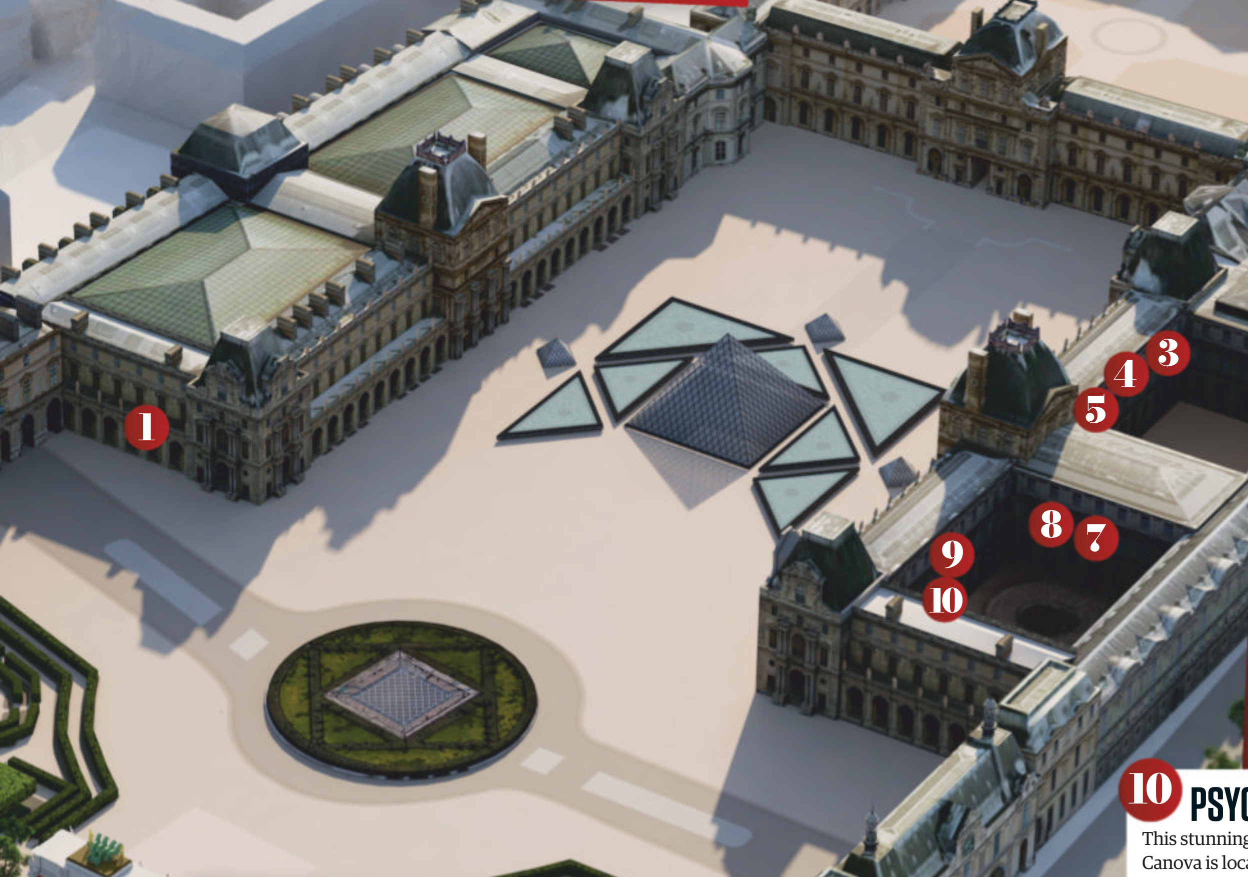


6 DEATH OF THE VIRGIN

Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin* is one of the baroque painter's masterpieces, demonstrating his impressive use of chiaroscuro – a technique that contrasts light with dark. Painted around 1606, it's also notable for its controversial origins. Commissioned to adorn a chapel in a church in Rome, Caravaggio's alleged use of a prostitute as a model for the figure of the deceased Virgin Mary saw the painting rejected by the church. However, it's now considered one of his most significant works.

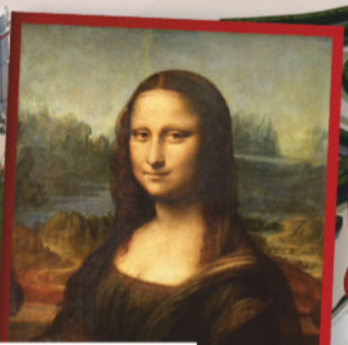
1 MARLY HORSES

The *Marly Horses* by baroque French sculptor Guillaume Coustou the Elder are on display in the Cour Marly, a dedicated indoor courtyard that holds works from the gardens of the Château de Marly, a residence of King Louis XIV. The two sculptures of rearing horses with their grooms were carved out of Carrara marble in the 1740s and stand at the top of the courtyard.



10 PSYCHE REVIVED BY CUPID'S KISS

This stunning marble sculpture by Italian artist Antonio Canova is located in the Michelangelo gallery. Two versions of *Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss* were created by Canova, with the Louvre holding the first version, made between 1787 and 1793. Known for his portrayals in marble of mythological scenes, the romance and beauty emanating from Psyche and Cupid make the sculpture a triumph of neoclassical art.

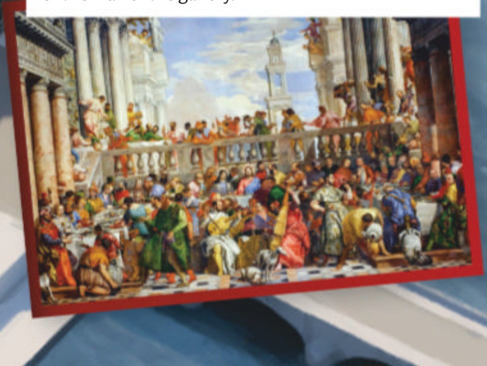


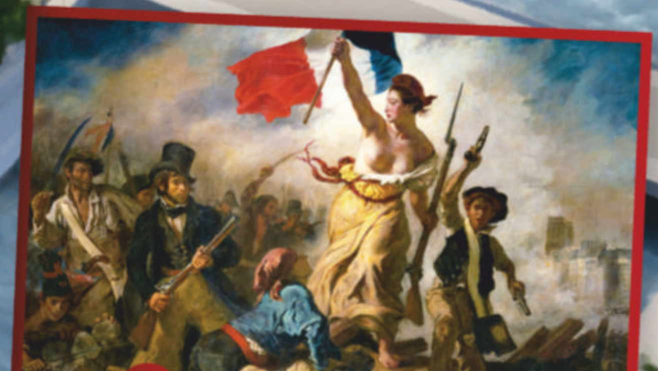
7 MONA LISA

Undoubtedly the jewel in the Louvre's collection and one of the most recognisable paintings in the world, the *Mona Lisa* by Leonardo da Vinci is a highlight for visitors. Created by Da Vinci some time in the early 1500s, it's a portrait of a woman thought to be Lisa del Giocondo, who is depicted face-on with an enigmatic expression. In 1911 the painting was stolen from the Louvre and found two years later in Florence, Italy.

8 THE WEDDING AT CANA

Sometimes overlooked by Louvre visitors because it hangs on the opposite wall to the *Mona Lisa*, *The Wedding at Cana* by Paolo Veronese is a detailed and colourful masterpiece portraying the biblical story of the wedding where Jesus turned water into wine. Painted in 1563 during the late Renaissance, this vast work features 132 different figures and occupies an entire wall of the gallery.





9 LIBERTY LEADING THE PEOPLE

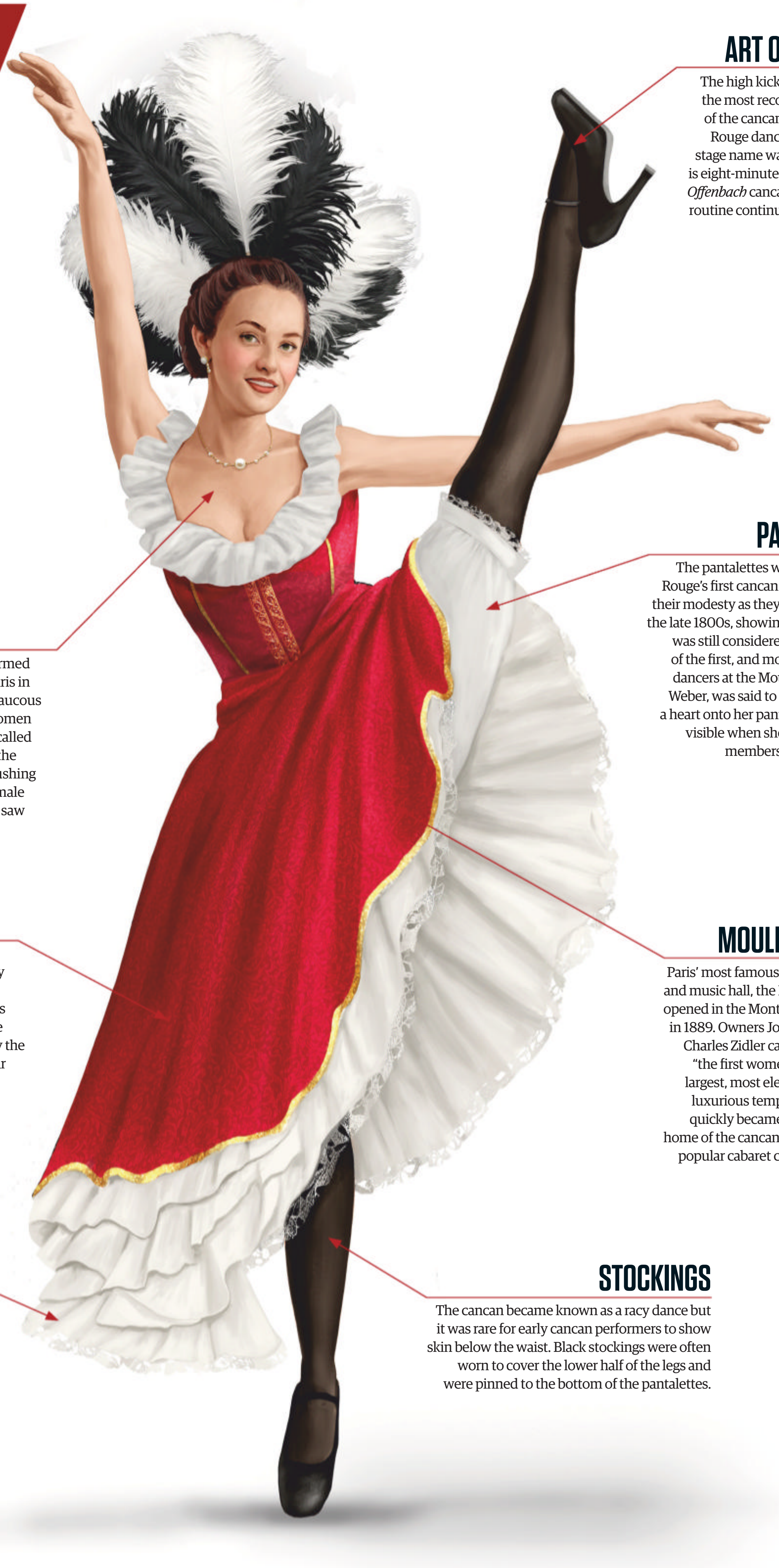
Painted by Eugène Delacroix in 1830, *Liberty Leading the People* commemorates the July Revolution of the same year that saw the removal of Charles X from the French throne. In Delacroix's vibrant depiction, the personification of Liberty waves the French tricolour flag as men climb a barricade. It's considered one of the most important artworks in French history.

Illustration: Adrian Mann
Insets: © Alamy

MOULIN ROUGE CANCAN DANCER

Paris, France

1889 - present



ORIGIN OF THE CANCAN

The first incarnation was a quadrille performed by men and women in the ballrooms of Paris in the 1820s. It quickly evolved into a more raucous style, danced exclusively by men. Soon women also began to perform this new quadrille, called the chahut. By 1889 it had been renamed the cancan and the high-kicking, boundary-pushing routine, now performed exclusively by female dancers at the Moulin Rouge cabaret club, saw the style become hugely popular.

COLOURS

While cancan dancers at the Moulin Rouge have worn many colours over the years, the red outfit has become synonymous with the venue - Moulin Rouge literally means 'red mill'. Today the cancan dancers at the club wear red, white and blue ensembles reflecting the French flag.

PETTICOATS

The traditional cancan outfit has large frilled petticoats worn underneath the skirt. These layers are exposed as the dancer kicks her legs outwards and upwards, providing quite the spectacle. The petticoats are important in hiding and exposing the legs and derriere at different points of the dance.

ART OF THE CANCAN

The high kicks and line formation are the most recognisable characteristics of the cancan, established by Moulin Rouge dancer Louise Weber, whose stage name was La Goulue. The dance is eight-minutes long, performed to the *Offenbach* cancan composition, and the routine continues to be hugely popular at the Moulin Rouge.

PANTALETTES

The pantalettes worn by the Moulin Rouge's first cancan dancers protected their modesty as they performed. But in the late 1800s, showing one's underwear was still considered scandalous. One of the first, and most famous, cancan dancers at the Moulin Rouge, Louise Weber, was said to have embroidered a heart onto her pantalettes which was visible when she flashed audience members during the dance.

MOULIN ROUGE

Paris' most famous cabaret venue and music hall, the Moulin Rouge, opened in the Montmartre district in 1889. Owners Joseph Oller and Charles Zidler called the venue "the first women's palace, the largest, most elegant and most luxurious temple of dance." It quickly became known as the home of the cancan and remains a popular cabaret club to this day.

STOCKINGS

The cancan became known as a racy dance but it was rare for early cancan performers to show skin below the waist. Black stockings were often worn to cover the lower half of the legs and were pinned to the bottom of the pantalettes.

Illustration: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

SCULPTURES OF PORT MAHON

Deep beneath the city streets, among thousands human bones, can be found works of art painstakingly carved by one man

Paris, 1777-1782

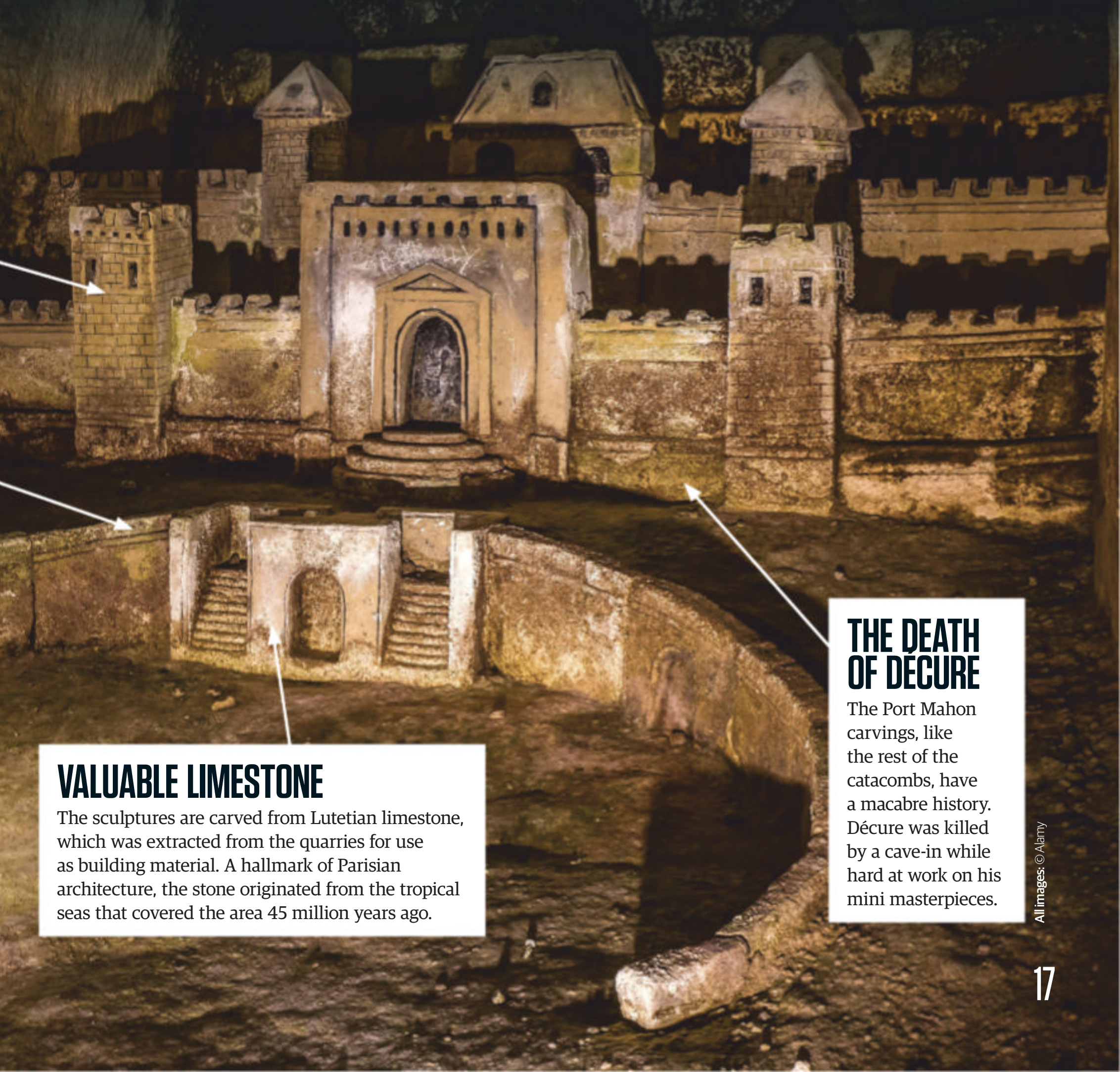
As the 18th century drew to a close, Paris had a problem – its cemeteries were quickly becoming overcrowded. As sanitation issues and health risks became more widespread, the unprecedented decision was taken to move millions of the remains away from the city centre. But where to?

Deep beneath the suburbs lay a vast network of abandoned mines, the Tombe-Issoire quarries, once used to harvest stone for construction. Over several years, in the dark of night bodies were removed and taken to these tunnels. During the following century these remains were rearranged and the macabre Paris catacombs as we know them today were created.

Among the many strange sites that can be found among the skull-embedded tunnels, the most curious have to be the sculptures of Port Mahon in Menorca. These fascinating works of art are the creations of François Décure, who had served as a soldier in the armies of King Louis XV. Décure was captured by the British and spent five years imprisoned in Menorca.

Upon his return to Paris, he worked in the quarries. Still deeply affected by his years of incarceration, between 1777 and 1782 Décure attempted to carve recreations of some of the island's most famous sites from memory. On his breaks and between shifts, he would disappear into a forgotten corner where he worked on the sculptures, chiselling them from the limestone. How successful he was at this is debated, and it's likely that the sculptures depict half-remembered versions of the buildings from Décure's imagination.

Over many years these curious artefacts have been restored and preserved, and can still be viewed today. Yet these sculptures are not the only unusual sights buried deep within the catacombs. Those who are brave enough to venture inside (a sign above the entrance warns: "Stop, here is the empire of death") can also see the 'Barrel' in the 'Crypt of Passion'. It's perhaps the most ornate display of human remains in the world, in which hundreds of skulls and tibias have been positioned to resemble a huge barrel.



PORT MAHON FORTRESS

There are a number of sculptures in the 'Port Mahon Corridor' and the most striking – and certainly the most detailed – is the one shown here. It depicts the fortress in Menorca where François Décure was imprisoned.

DARK ARTS

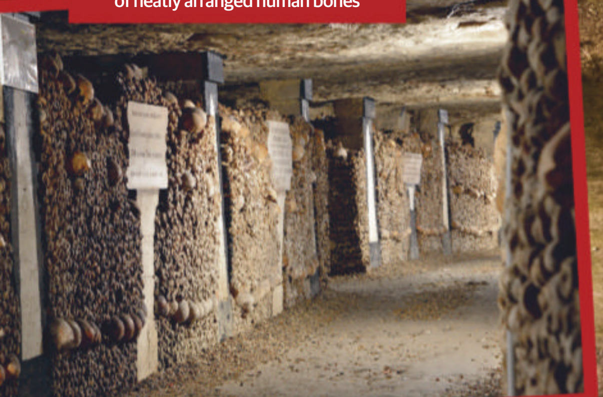
Décure created his sculptures using the most basic tools of his trade and with only the dim light of a burning torch to work from.

VALUABLE LIMESTONE

The sculptures are carved from Lutetian limestone, which was extracted from the quarries for use as building material. A hallmark of Parisian architecture, the stone originated from the tropical seas that covered the area 45 million years ago.

THE DEATH OF DÉCURE

The Port Mahon carvings, like the rest of the catacombs, have a macabre history. Décure was killed by a cave-in while hard at work on his mini masterpieces.



The catacombs contain many kilometres of neatly arranged human bones

All images: © Alamy

PARISIAN PAINTERS AND POETS

Paris has always been a magnet for bohemians and creatives. Here are ten artists and writers who lived in the City of Lights

Jean Cocteau

French

5 July 1889 – 11 October 1963

Jean Cocteau was a 20th century Renaissance man who excelled as an artist, writer and filmmaker, among his many other talents. From 1944, Cocteau maintained a flat in Paris and after 1947 he alternated between this and his home in the small village of Milly-la-Forêt. Among his most famous works are the 1926 play *Orphée* (the artist's interpretation of the Orpheus myth), his avant-garde 1946 interpretation of *Beauty and the Beast* and his interior decorations of the Chapelle Saint-Pierre in Villefranche-sur-Mer (1957). Cocteau was known to have had numerous relationships with both men and women, among them actor and director Jean Marais.

During World War II Cocteau remained in France and, although he was not a collaborator, did maintain friendships with some Nazis, such as sculptor Arno Breker.

MAN RAY

AMERICAN, 27 AUGUST 1890 – 18 NOVEMBER 1976

Despite being born in Pennsylvania, it was in Paris that Emmanuel Radnitzky found a home. Better known by his pseudonym Man Ray, he became a leading figure in the Dada and Surrealist movements, renowned for his paintings and striking photography. His most famous creations are his 'rayographs', which he created by exposing the subject directly to light, circumventing the need for a camera. He left Paris in 1940 due to the Second World War, returning afterwards.

ARTHUR RIMBAUD

FRENCH, 20 OCTOBER 1854 – 10 NOVEMBER 1891

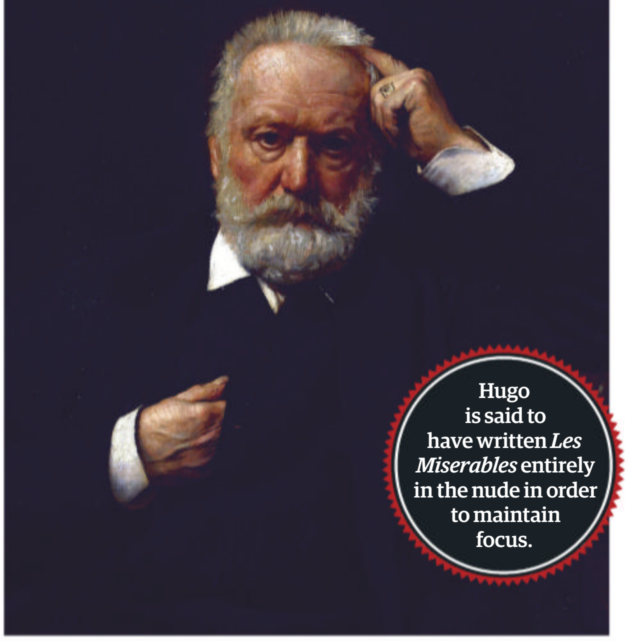
Rimbaud's first poems were composed when he was a teenager. He fled to Paris at 17 and for two years was in a tumultuous relationship with the poet Paul Verlaine. The relationship was violent, with Verlaine at one point shooting his lover. At the age of 21 Rimbaud abandoned poetry for good and spent his remaining years as an explorer and trader, dying of cancer at 37.

Victor Hugo

French

26 Feb 1802 – 22 May 1885

One of France's most famous sons, Hugo is best remembered for his novels *Les Miserables* (1862) and *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831). He was also a poet of some renown, with *Demain dès l'aube* his most highly regarded work. Following the coup d'etat of Napoleon III in 1851, Hugo chose to flee his beloved city and France entirely. Having supported the revolution of 1848, he was troubled by the increasingly authoritarian regime of Napoleon III and spent his remaining days in exile on the island of Guernsey. Today, Hugo's Parisian home at the Place des Vosges can be visited by tourists.



Hugo is said to have written *Les Miserables* entirely in the nude in order to maintain focus.

TAMARA ŁEMPICKA

POLISH, 16 MAY 1894 – 18 MARCH 1980

Artist Tamara Łempicka, best known for her stylised portraits and striking nudes, moved to Paris in 1918, where she lived in an art deco duplex apartment. Her work has been associated with the art styles adopted by the European fascist movements of the time, but Łempicka left Paris in 1939 shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War. She continued to work into her twilight years, experiencing a revival of interest in the 1970s.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

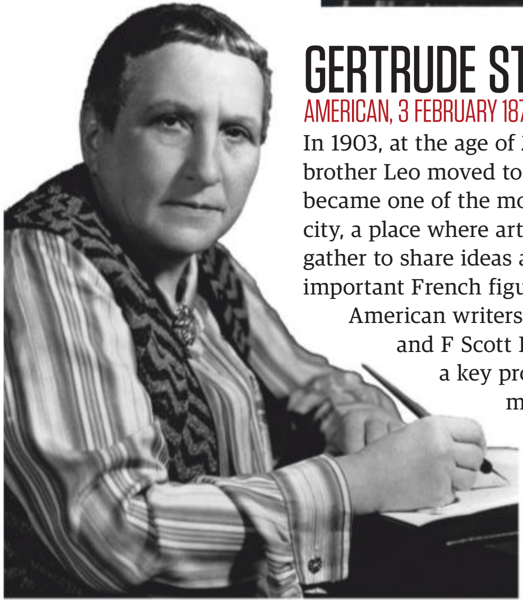
FRENCH, 9 APRIL 1821 – 31 AUGUST 1867

Much of Baudelaire's poetry focussed on Paris, but the natural darkness of his work led him to explore aspects of the city not often expressed in art. *Le Spleen de Paris* in particular is a collection of 50 poems that focus on contemporary life in the city that examine everything from sex workers to poverty and debauchery. Baudelaire was also known for his translations of Edgar Allen Poe, helping the US author become highly regarded throughout France.

JAMES BALDWIN

AMERICAN, 2 AUGUST 1924 – 1 DECEMBER 1987

Writer and civil rights activist Baldwin first moved to Paris in 1948, finding a reprieve from the homophobia and racism he experienced in the United States. He lived in the city for nine years before moving to the South of France, where he spent the last 17 years of his life.



GERTRUDE STEIN

AMERICAN, 3 FEBRUARY 1874 – 27 JULY 1946

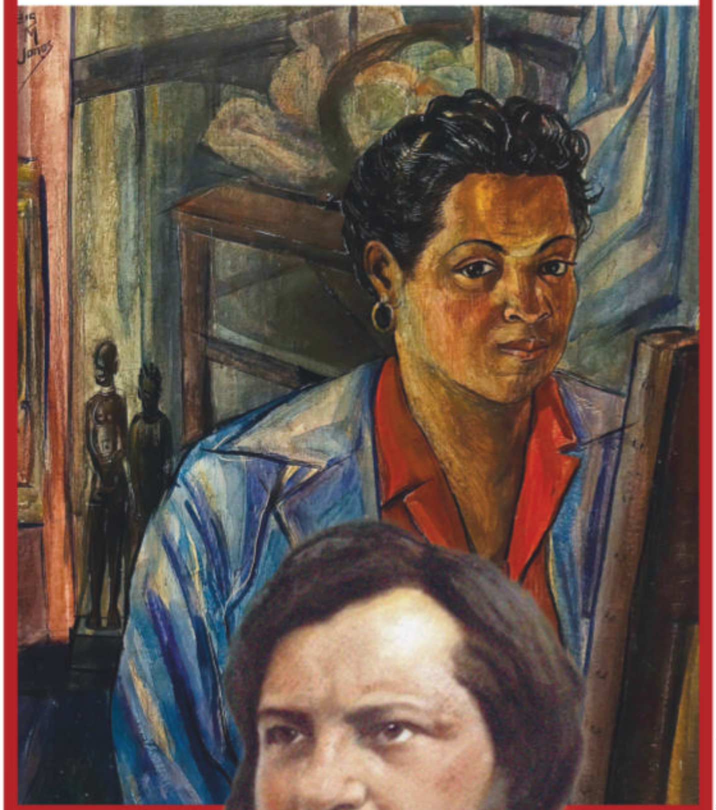
In 1903, at the age of 29, Gertrude Stein and her brother Leo moved to Paris. Her home quickly became one of the most celebrated salons in the city, a place where artists, writers and poets would gather to share ideas and discuss their work. Here, important French figures would mingle with American writers such as Ernest Hemingway and F Scott Fitzgerald. Stein was also a key proponent of the Avant-Garde movement. Her own literary works divided critics and readers due to their complexity, and she is best remembered for her profound influence on other artists.

Loïs Mailou Jones

American

3 November 1905 – 9 June 1998

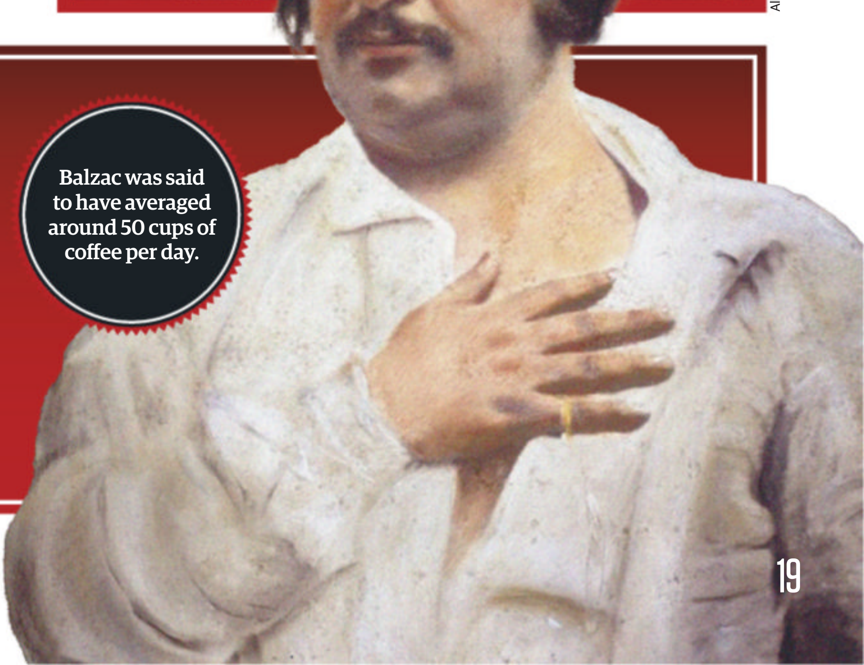
Loïs Mailou Jones was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and spent much of her life in the United States, but fell in love with Paris when she travelled there on sabbatical in 1937. An African-American woman, Jones faced comparatively little prejudice in the city compared to what she experienced in her home country. Her style fused Impressionism along with influences she picked up during her trips to Africa and Haiti. Jones believed strongly in the importance of education, teaching at Howard University in Washington, DC, from 1930 to 1977. She continued to return regularly to France until her death in 1998.



Honoré de Balzac

French, 20 May 1799 – 18 August 1850

Paris is the setting for much of author Honoré de Balzac's work, and he also frequented some of the city's renowned literary salons. Today, Balzac is still highly regarded for his well-developed characters and relentless dedication to his craft. He wrote between 14 to 16 hours a day, surviving on very little sleep, and was said to have been fuelled by copious amounts of strong coffee. His magnum-opus is a series entitled *La Comédie humaine*, comprising 91 finished entries (including novels, short stories and essays) and 46 unfinished ones.



Balzac was said to have averaged around 50 cups of coffee per day.

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CITY OF FOOD

David Downie explains why, for centuries, Paris has been a go-to destination for cuisine of all kinds

Downie is an author and journalist who divides his time between Italy and France. He has written a number of books on the cuisine of those countries, including *A Taste of Paris: A History of the Parisian Love Affair With Food*. His latest work is *Shadows of Rome: A Memoir*, and he publishes as @daviddownieauthor on Substack.

How did Paris earn a reputation as a food-loving city?

That reputation has a lot to do with the invention, if you will, of the à la carte restaurant in the second half of the 1700s. Prior to that you went to a tavern, or auberge, and got pot luck, meaning whatever was available that day. Suddenly a handful of eating establishments popped up in the vicinity of the Louvre and Palais-Royal, the heart of historic Paris, with menus offering a selection of tempting dishes of the kind the aristocrats and haute bourgeoisie [upper middle class] might eat at home.

It's hard to exaggerate how revolutionary the concept was. You had your own table, you weren't forced to sit with others; you were waited on by a professional, not a scullery maid; and you were promised healthful, delicious food that would 'restore' you, hence the term, restaurant – a place to be restored.

The tale of the unemployed chefs of the Ancien Régime inventing the restaurant is a myth. Restaurants got started before the revolution of 1789. It is true, however, that the number of restaurants skyrocketed once the aristocrats fled abroad or got their heads chopped off and the chefs had to scramble, so to speak, to find employment. That reputation grew in the 1800s thanks to these once-grand chefs of once-grand noble families who were now running eateries of all descriptions.

Why did the restaurant come into being almost overnight?

There are various theories, based on eyewitness accounts from the 1760s onward, and there's lots of speculation. The most plausible explanation is that debauchery and bad eating habits were rife so plenty of Parisians and visitors needed 'restauration'. Also, the royal court was in Versailles but the economic, social, cultural, artistic and practical life of the nation was in Paris. You had hundreds or thousands of courtiers and merchants and diplomats based in Paris but making day trips to Versailles. These people needed good food served in appealing surroundings.

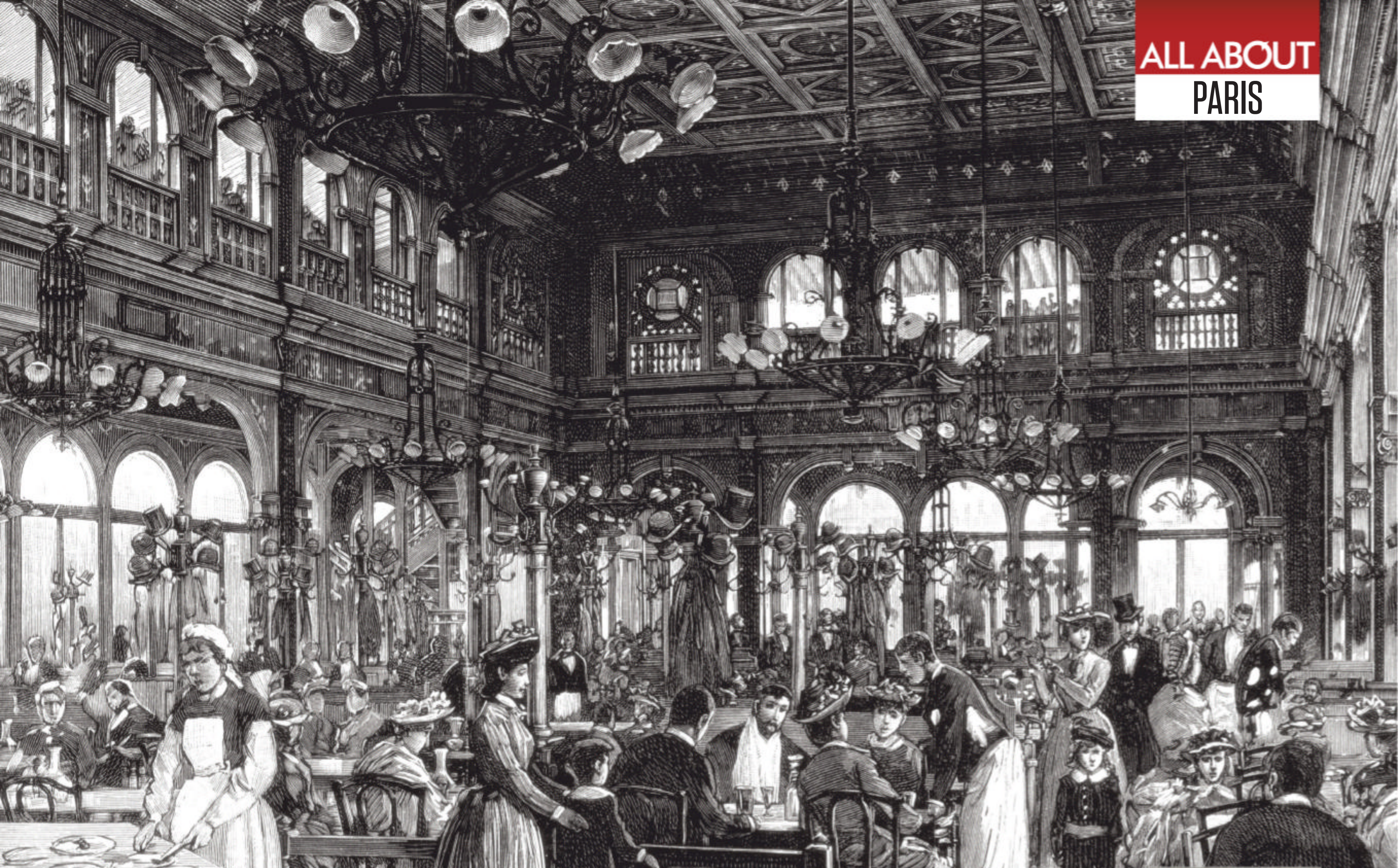
Another revolutionary thing about the restaurant was that women – even unaccompanied women – were able to go there. All you needed were the means because, then as now, eating well in Paris meant spending a considerable sum of money.

How central is Paris to the development of French cuisine as a whole?

Paris is caput mundi – the centre of the world – to French cuisine, at least in historical terms. The concentration of wealth and aristocracy in the city meant that the means and demand were there. Paris was and is a talent- and money-magnet. Also, the influences from the provinces and abroad were essential. Paris has always been full to bursting with Italians, for instance, right from the time of Julius Caesar. In the Renaissance and throughout the reigns of the Bourbon kings you find Italians running the government, designing and building the palaces and fortresses (think Leonardo da Vinci), performing operas, cooking and so forth. They brought Italian cuisine to

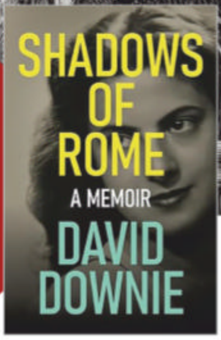
RIGHT Le Train Bleu in Gare de Lyon is a classic example of Parisian fine dining

Headshot: © Alison Harris



ABOVE The Duval Restaurant in Paris was a popular and affordable spot in the late 19th century

SHADOWS OF ROME: A MEMOIR
BY DAVID DOWNIE
IS OUT NOW



Paris early on and it's still about the most popular food in Paris (and possibly the world – think of pasta and pizza).

Paris really never had its own cuisine in the way Rome or Florence did (and do). Paris appropriated from the provinces and from abroad, adopted and adapted and often improved the food, or at the very least the presentation of the food.

At what point did Paris start to become a go-to destination for food lovers from other countries?

It really started in the 18th century and took off in the 19th, which was the heyday of dining in Paris. In modern times, the advent of the *Michelin Guide* to restaurants – first published in 1900 – was also key to drawing in food lovers. The French have always been unbeatable when it comes to self-promotion, especially regarding cuisine. And they were very clever: they sent out culinary ambassadors in the form of highly trained chefs into the world, and in the 19th and early 20th centuries it was de rigueur to have a French private chef and to eat French food, everywhere in the West. No other nation, to my knowledge, has been more successful than the French at exporting their cooking at the high end.

Historically speaking, are there any examples of classic Parisian street-food? Or a dish that was associated with the city, even if it's not anymore?

That's an interesting question. As I've said, most food consumed in Paris over the centuries was really provincial cuisine brought in by transplants, or foreign food. The real Parisian dish par excellence was, believe it or not, bouillon of beef (and other creatures). For centuries, Paris was known for its perpetual hotpots, which were huge cauldrons of boiling bouillon (hence the name) with bits of meat of all descriptions floating in the pots. Jambon de Paris, the famous boiled ham of Paris, only got its name in 1915, during the First World War, and it's not from Paris, of course, there are no pig farms in or near Paris. The baguette was first baked in 1920! The croissant, both savoury or sweet, came from Vienna and was first baked in Paris in the mid-1800s. Croque monsieur – Welsh rarebit – is now typical but where did it come from? Wales? Choucroute (sauerkraut) comes from Alsace and is hugely popular.

Is Paris still seen as a leading city for fine cuisine?

You can still eat very well in Paris if you're willing to spend the money to do so. The proliferation of cheap eateries has, however, dented the reputation of French cuisine. When you see a long menu with dozens of offerings, beware: usually such restaurants buy prepared foods from wholesalers and simply reheat them and serve them to unsuspecting customers. When you see 'Cuisine Francaise' writ large on the restaurant's façade or menu, that's another warning sign. Translated, it means 'tourist-trap fare'! But you can certainly eat very well if you enjoy foreign cuisines or innovative French 'cuisine d'auteur', meaning creative or modernised cooking.

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Places to Explore

DISCOVERING PARIS

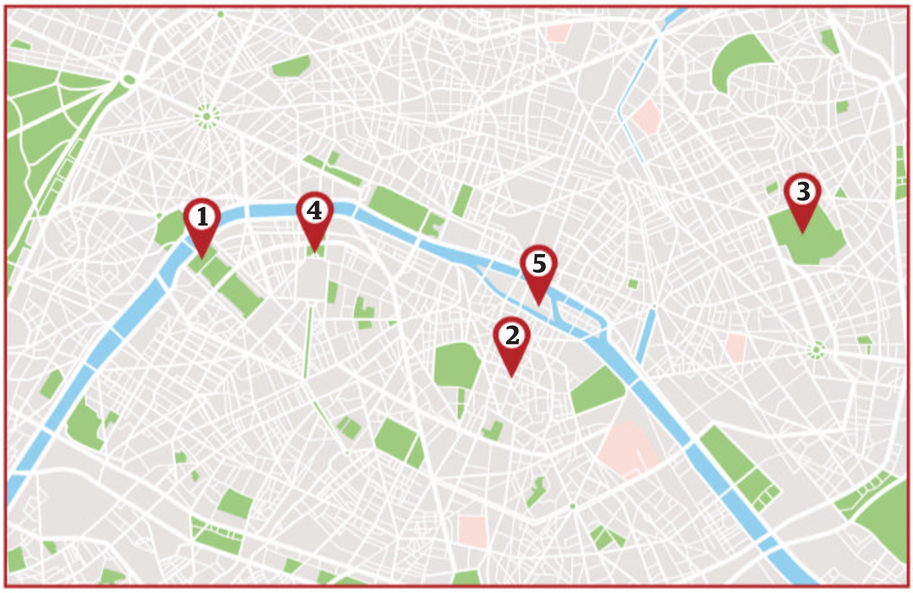
A selection of some of the city's most significant historic landmarks

1 EIFFEL TOWER

CHAMP DE MARS

A bucket list destination for many people around the world and the most famous landmark in Paris, the Eiffel Tower has become a symbol of France. Construction work on the huge wrought-iron structure began in 1887 and it was completed two years later. Its opening marked the centenary of the French Revolution and it was also the centrepiece of the International Exposition of 1889. Designed by Gustave Eiffel, it served as the impressive entrance to the exposition.

Nicknamed La Dame de Fer (The Iron Lady), the Eiffel Tower is the tallest building in Paris at 330 metres high and dominates the city's skyline. Located on the banks of the Seine, it provides the perfect lookout over the city for visitors who venture up to one of its three floors. A museum and restaurants are located inside the tower and can be reached via elevators, two of which are the original ones from 1889. At night, sparkling lights illuminate the tower, creating a stunning spectacle.



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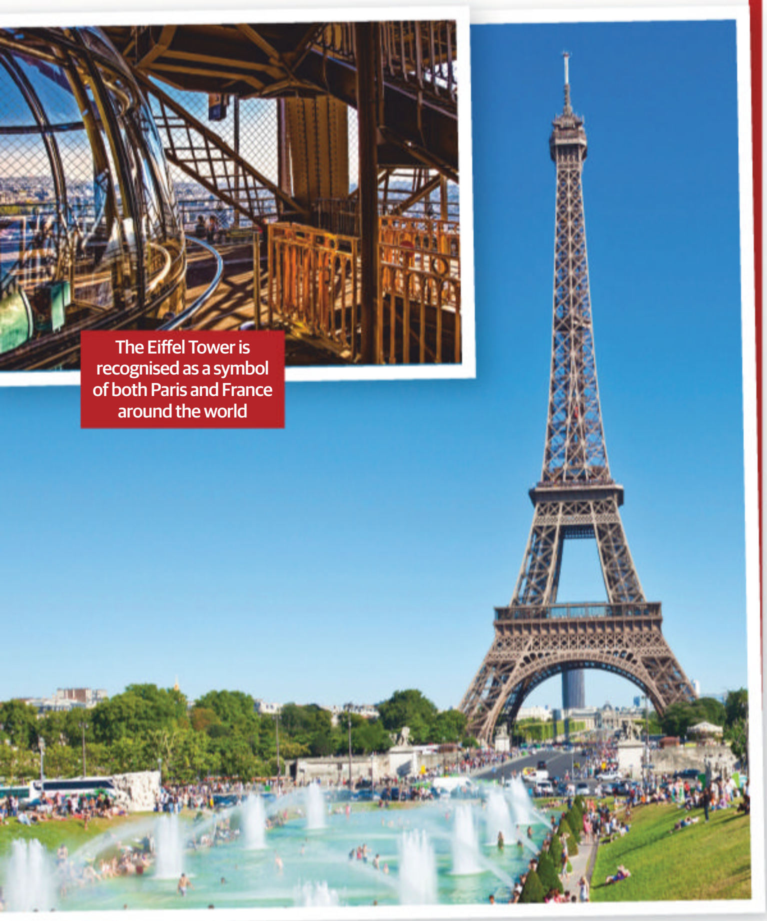

The Eiffel Tower is recognised as a symbol of both Paris and France around the world

2 PANTHÉON

PLACE DU PANTHÉON

Paris' Panthéon serves as a mausoleum to some of the greatest figures in French history. Built from 1757 in the style of its Roman counterpart, the Panthéon was originally constructed as a church to house the relics of Saint Genevieve. The function of the building was secularised during the French Revolution (1789-99) then later reconsecrated, alternating between being a church and a secular mausoleum several times more before finally being designated a non-religious mausoleum in the late 19th century. As a result the Panthéon is a unique structure – a lay tomb adorned with imagery from its religious past as well as scenes from French history.

Interred inside the Panthéon are 81 notable figures. Some of the most illustrious people buried there include writers Victor Hugo and Emile Zola, philosopher Voltaire and educator Louis Braille. Only six women have been interred at the Panthéon, including scientist Marie Curie and entertainer Josephine Baker.

The facade is similar to that of the ancient Pantheon in Rome

Père Lachaise is thought to be the most visited graveyard in the world

3 PÈRE LACHAISE

BOULEVARD DE MÉNILMONTANT

This immense cemetery sprawling across 110 acres is located in Paris' 20th arrondissement. Said to be the most visited necropolis in the world, the Père Lachaise cemetery is a labyrinth of graves and tombs, among which can be found the final resting places of many significant historical figures. The cemetery was first opened in 1804 by Napoleon Bonaparte to provide more space for burials as the graveyards in the inner city were becoming full and posed a health risk to people living nearby. The new cemetery was non-denominational in accordance with Napoleon's declaration that "every citizen has the right to be buried regardless of their race or religion".

There are several gravesites that have become popular destinations for those wishing to pay tribute to the renowned people buried there. Medieval writers and tragic lovers Peter Abelard and Héloïse d'Argenteuil are buried together within Père Lachaise and romantics from across the world leave love letters at the site of their tomb. Oscar Wilde's tomb has, in recent years, been protected by glass due to the number of people kissing the grave. Other sites in the cemetery visited by admiring pilgrims include the graves of Edith Piaf, Frédéric Chopin and The Doors frontman Jim Morrison, whose tomb is the most visited of Père Lachaise. Other visitors are attracted to the cemetery for some of the extraordinarily designed tombs.

The golden dome of Les Invalides is iconic

4 LES INVALIDES

RUE DE GRENELLE

An impressive complex of buildings, the Hôtel des Invalides, more commonly known as Les Invalides, was first constructed between 1671 and 1676 under the orders of King Louis XIV. The institution provided aid and housing for army veterans and included space for hospital care and, later, a soldier's chapel and a royal chapel. The breathtaking golden dome of the royal chapel has become the defining and most recognisable feature of the institution's architecture.

In 1840, work began in the royal chapel to build a magnificent tomb, directly under the dome, in which the remains of Napoleon Bonaparte could be interred. The tomb took over 20 years to finish, and Napoleon's remains were finally laid to rest there in 1861. Now, as well as attracting visitors to Napoleon's tomb and several other military graves, Les Invalides is a tourist destination due to the military museums opened in the complex from 1905. One of the biggest in the world, the Army Museum, contains a huge collection of artefacts from French military history.

5 NOTRE-DAME CATHEDRAL

6 PARVIS NOTRE-DAME - PLACE JEAN-PAUL II

Standing on an island in the middle of the River Seine is one of Paris' oldest and most iconic landmarks: Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris (Cathedral of Our Lady of Paris). First built in the 12th century, the medieval church is famous for its stunning gothic architecture including terrifying gargoyles, stone carvings, imposing towers and beautiful stained glass windows. The cathedral and its medieval style has fallen in and out of favour with the people of Paris over the centuries, with many restoration projects having been completed to save the church throughout the years.

In 1804 Napoleon chose to be crowned emperor in Notre-Dame and in 1831 Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* further helped to enhance the cathedral's popularity. Notre-Dame is also home to some of the most important and revered Christian relics in the world. Brought to France in the 13th century, items that were claimed to be the Crown of Thorns, a piece of the cross and a nail from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ have been housed at the cathedral since 1806. Due to its age, design and significance in Paris' history, Notre-Dame continues to be a well-loved landmark and was granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 1991. The strength of feeling for Notre-Dame was evident in 2019 when it was seriously damaged by a fire, inspiring a global outpouring of love and support. After restorations, it was reopened in 2024.

Notre-Dame Cathedral before the 2019 fire destroyed its spire

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WHAT IF D-DAY FAILED?
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LUCHA LIBRE HERO
The Mexican wrestler who became an icon
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THUNDER AND FURY NORSE GODS

Written by Tom Birkett

Uncover the secrets of the Viking pantheon and their powerful influence on the world

The Norse gods are a world apart from their southern counterparts. Unlike the beautiful, aloof and immortal deities of the Greek tradition, the Norse gods get their hands dirty with the grime of human existence, and share all our proclivities, contradictions and failings. Along with their human allies, they are caught in an existential conflict with the giants and the monsters of the Norse imagination, and struggle to impose their will on a chaotic world. Most striking of all is the fact that they will ultimately fail in the effort to protect their civilisation, and will lose the final battle against the giants. They can delay the inevitable for a time, but there is no escape from the fate that the violent creation of the world sets in motion.

THE BEGINNINGS

The Norse story of the creation of the world, at least as it is told by the 13th century mythographer Snorri Sturluson, sees fire and ice meet in the empty void of Ginnungagap. Heat emanating from the primordial realm of Muspelheim melts the ice-flows draining from Niflheim, and in the mists of this between space, the first being emerges – a giant named Ymir. Ymir creates new giants in the sweat of his armpits and crossed legs and feeds from a cow, which also materialises from the mists. ▶

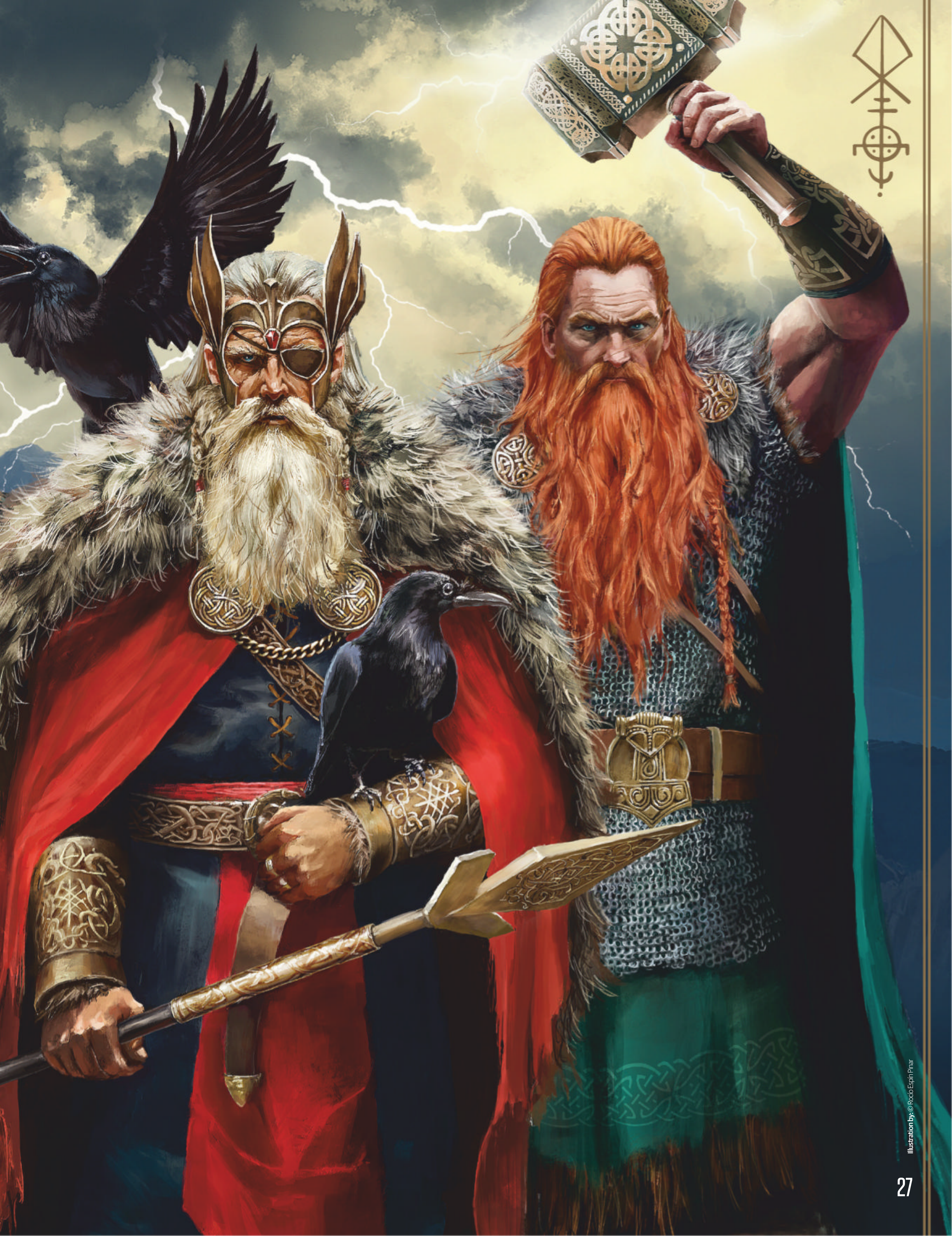


Illustration by: © Rocío Espín Pinar

The first gods owe a lot to this cow, as she licked them from the salt-rimmed ice, but the sources say nothing of what happened to her when the grandchildren of these first gods – three brothers – band together and kill Ymir, dismembering him and using his body parts to build the world: a skull for the sky, bones for the mountains, bristles for the forests and brains for the clouds. It's a violent beginning to the story of creation, and in many ways it's an act that casts a shadow over the story of the Norse gods who expect – and know – that the world will end with the giants' final and devastating retribution for Ymir's murder.

One of these three brothers has a name that will be familiar to most: Odin, the one-eyed god. His brothers fade out of the picture after creating dwarfs from the maggots wriggling in Ymir's decaying flesh and humans from pieces of driftwood washed up on the beach, but Odin remains and takes his place as the father of the gods and byword for the relentless pursuit of knowledge. In truth, what Odin is really seeking is not wisdom for wisdom's sake, but a way to forestall his family's inevitable fate.

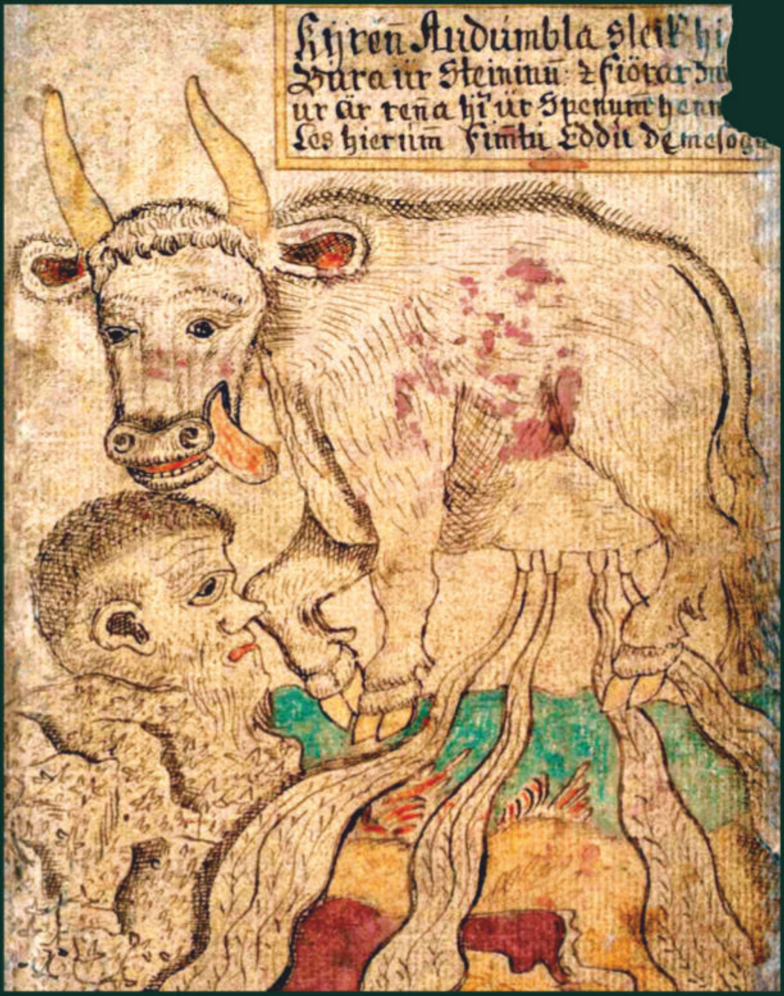
ODIN

The fact that the Norse peoples gave Odin the role of patriarch, the closest thing Norse mythology has to a Zeus, may reflect what leadership entailed in the Viking Age. Odin is not an honourable character. He is a creator, for sure, breathing life into the first humans and fashioning the very fabric of the world, but for most of mythical time he's more preoccupied with tricking the giants out of their possessions, engaging in riddle contests that only he can win, committing adultery (and worse), and sacrificing body parts to increase his wisdom. He's a champion of human heroes, but is fickle in this regard as well, and everything he does is about gaining advantage for himself. He's closely connected with the aristocratic and priestly classes, and is most famous for presiding over Valhalla, where his Valkyries gather fallen warriors to feast and fight beneath his watchful eye. It's no coincidence that the animals associated with him – his two ravens, his pet wolves and the eagle he transforms into in order to escape from one particular bit of trickery in giantland – are also the beasts of battle in northern tradition, those scavengers who feasted on the corpses of the dead. Odin often appears in disguise, dressed in a cloak and hood, and one suspects that those who worshiped him wouldn't feel entirely blessed by a visit from this wily old man…

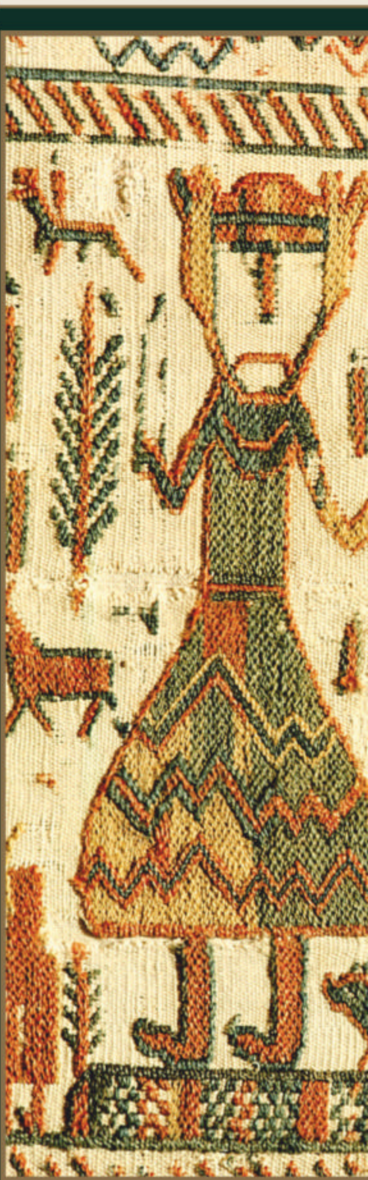
> "WHAT ODIN IS REALLY SEEKING IS NOT WISDOM FOR WISDOM'S SAKE, BUT A WAY TO FORESTALL HIS FAMILY'S INEVITABLE FATE"

THOR

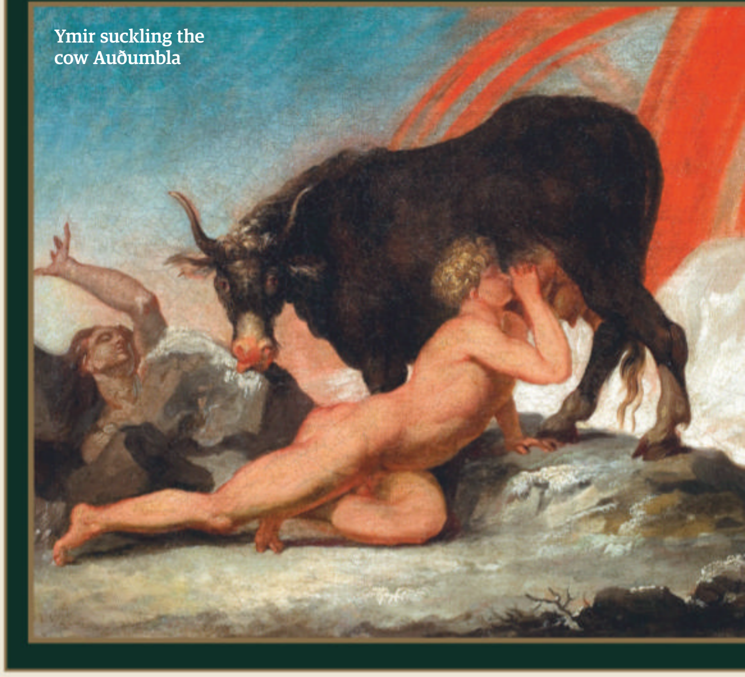
Thor is the son of Odin, and though he's often characterised as the god of thunder, he's better described as a protector of gods and men: keeping the giants at bay with his great strength and his super-weapon: the hammer Mjölnir. Thor is very much a man of action and often resorts to violence before thinking of the consequences. This has led to him being cast as brutish and slow, but Thor also uses his intelligence on occasion as well, such as when he wins a contest of wits with a dwarf suitor of his daughter. For the most part, though, it's his strength and impetuousness that comes through in the stories that survive, ▶


Kyrēn Audúmbla sleikr hi
Búra úr Steininū: ꝛ fiötar
ur är tēna hī úr Spenum henn
Les hieriim Fimti Eddu Demesögu

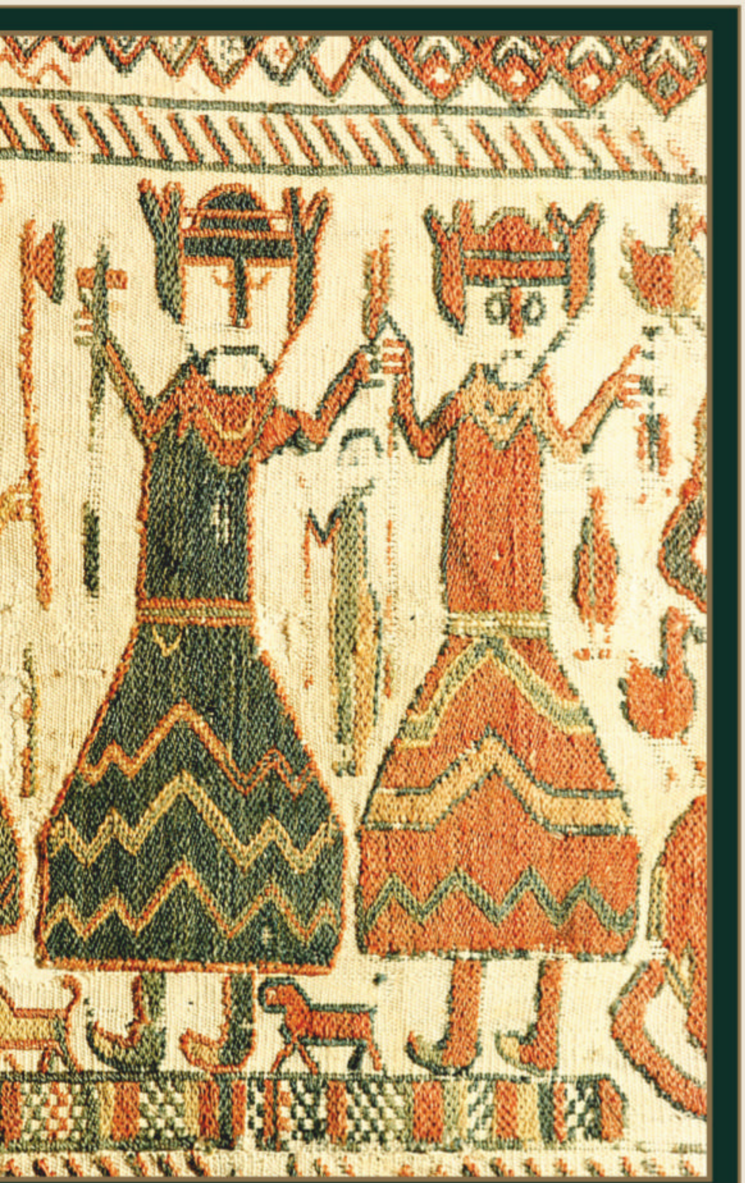
ABOVE A depiction of the cow Auðumbla licking the first god Búri out of the ice, from the 18th-century Icelandic manuscript *SÁM 66*

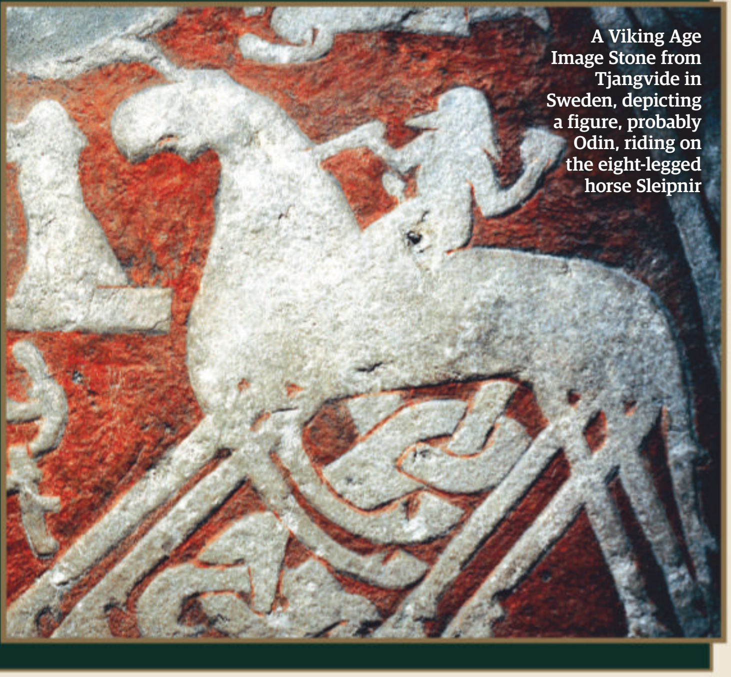


RIGHT Detail from the Skog Church tapestry (12th century) depicting one-eyed Odin, Thor with his hammer and Freyr with an ear of wheat



Ymir suckling the cow Auðumbla



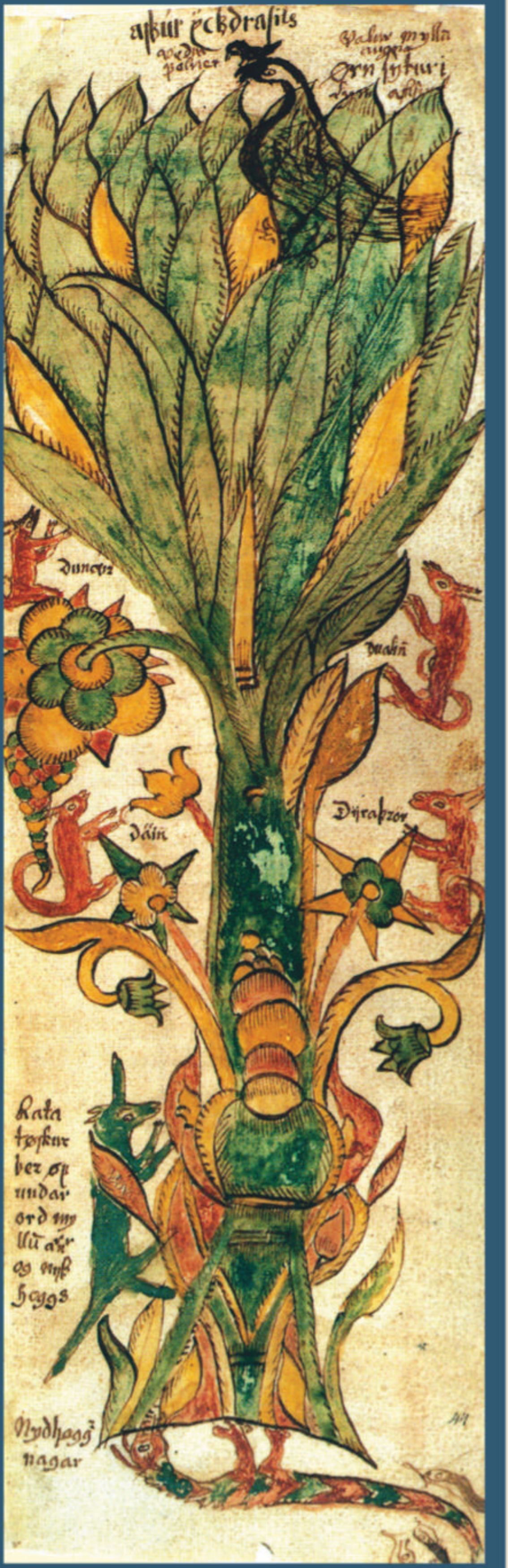


A Viking Age Image Stone from Tjangvide in Sweden, depicting a figure, probably Odin, riding on the eight-legged horse Sleipnir

THE NORSE COSMOS

Nine worlds connected by the World Tree

There are several references to nine distinct worlds in the Norse cosmos, and although they're not listed in any of the sources, several realms are mentioned individually. Central is the home of the gods, Asgard, with its golden halls and temples; another realm of the Vanir gods – Vanaheim – is mentioned, though never fully described. Midgard, meaning 'the middle enclosure', is the home of humans and is connected to Asgard by a rainbow bridge, Bifröst. Midgard is protected from the inhospitable realm of the giants, Jötunheim, by Ymir's eyelashes – an effective barrier, as we don't often see giants walking among us! Niflheim is an ice-bound realm, one of two that seem to have existed before the creation, the other being Muspelheim, the realm of fire. Hel may be synonymous with Niflheim, or have been imagined as another of the nine, deep beneath the earth. There are apparently two homes named after elves, Alfheim in the sky and Svartalfheim in the rocks beneath our feet. The latter home of 'dark elves' seems to have been where the dwarves lived and crafted precious things. Connecting all these realms is the mighty World Tree, whose roots pass into the subterranean world and whose branches reach into the heavens.



RIGHT A 17th-century Icelandic depiction of Yggdrasil – the World Tree

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LOKI'S MONSTROUS BROOD

A world-enveloping serpent, a gigantic wolf and the ruler of the underworld

Loki has a loyal wife, Sigyn, who minds him while he's chained beneath a venomous snake in the entrails of his legitimate son. Her loyalty must have been tested by Loki's philandering with a giant woman in the Iron Woods, the result of which is the birth of three monstrous children. The gods attempt to keep these children close at first – after all, what threat could a small snake, a wolf cub and a little girl be to the mighty deities?

However, the serpent soon grows so large that Odin has him cast into the deep ocean, where he carries on growing until he wraps the world in his coils. He's known as Jörmungandr, or the World Serpent, and is Thor's great enemy. The wolf cub also grows beyond the strength of the gods to control, so they trick him into being bound with a rope made of impossible things: the breath of a fish, the footsteps of a cat, the roots of a mountain. He only agrees to be bound when Tyr places his hand in his mouth, and when he realises he can't escape his tether he rips off the hand in his immense jaws.

The third child of Loki, Hel, is sent down to rule over the realm of the dead that also carries her name. She is a morose figure described as half bruised and half corpse-white. She guards her vast subterranean domain jealously and takes in all those who don't die a glorious death, including the god Baldr and his loyal wife Nanna.

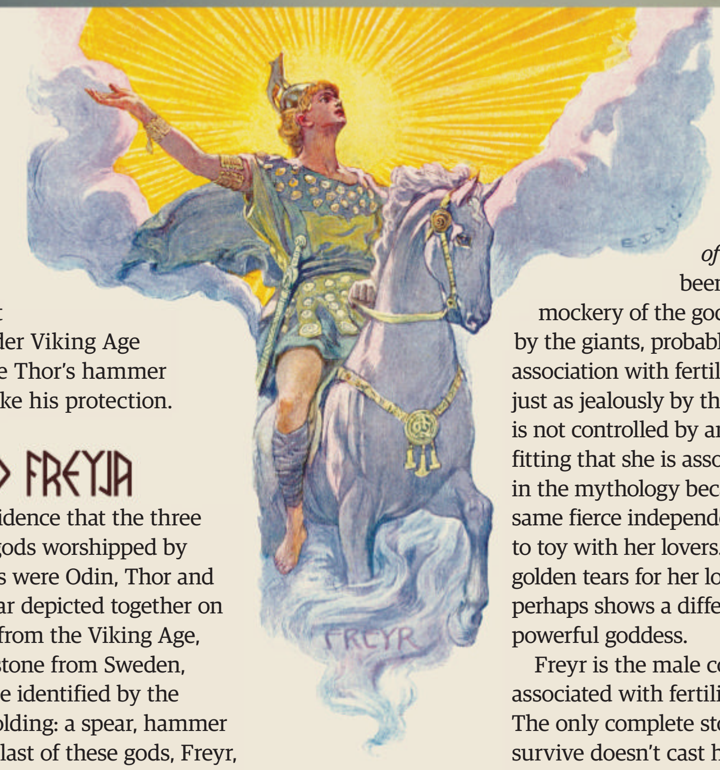
Not all Loki's children are sources of grief for the gods. He also gives birth to an eight-legged horse after a dalliance with a giant stallion. Despite his inauspicious parentage, Sleipnir is the best of all horses and is ridden by Odin.

RIGHT A possible depiction of Fenrir on the Tullstorp Runestone (c.1000)

whether it's attempting to wrestle with old age, fishing the Midgard-Serpent from the ocean to teach it a lesson, or dealing with unwelcome giant visitors. No wonder Viking Age worshippers wore Thor's hammer pendants to invoke his protection.

FREYR AND FREYJA

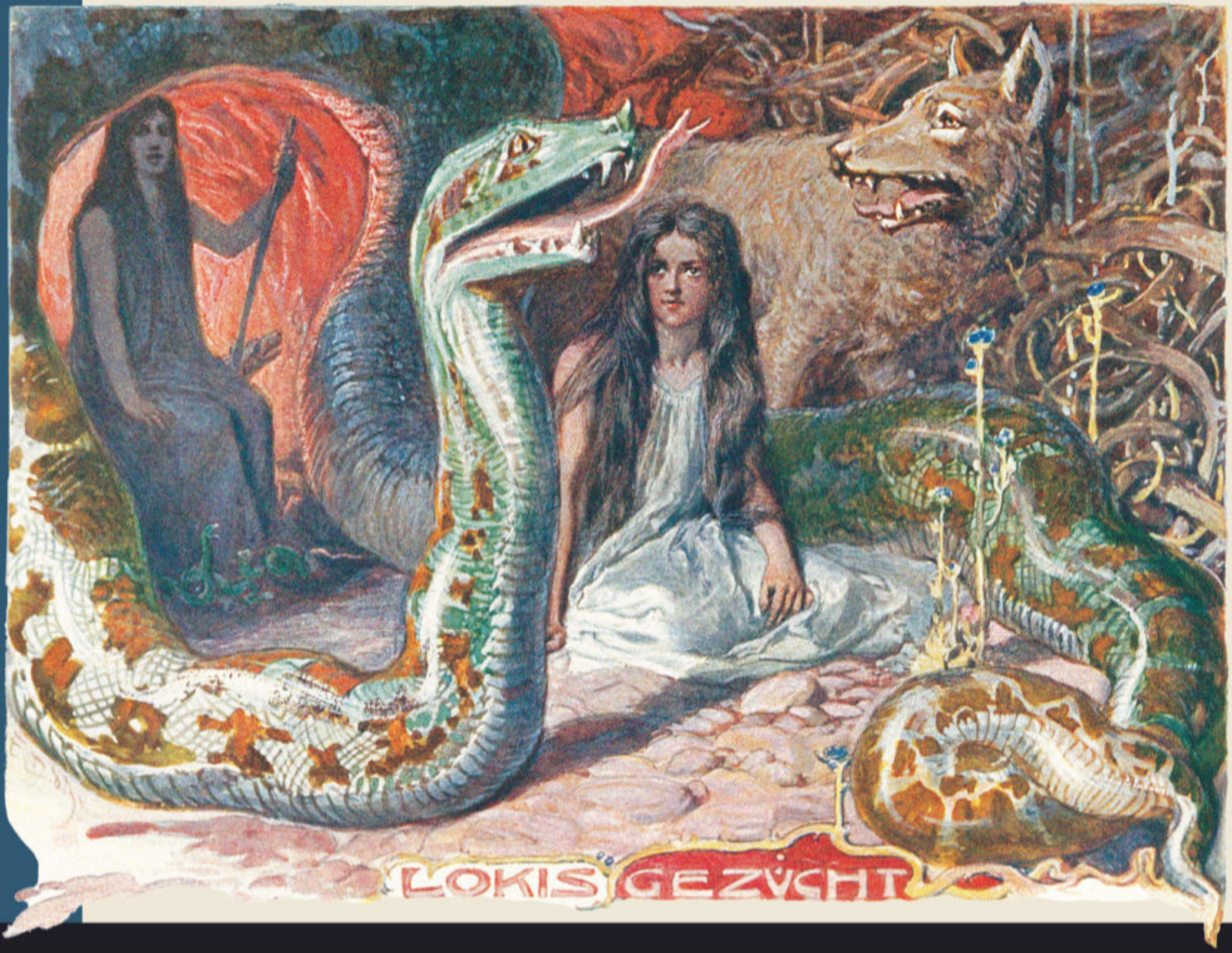
There is some evidence that the three most important gods worshipped by the Norse peoples were Odin, Thor and Freyr. They appear depicted together on several artworks from the Viking Age, including a runestone from Sweden, where they can be identified by the objects they're holding: a spear, hammer and a sickle. The last of these gods, Freyr, comes from a different family to the sprawling dynasty of the Æsir led by Odin. Both Freyr and his sister Freyja belong to the Vanir family of gods, associated particularly with regenerative powers, fertility and fecundity.



ABOVE Freyr is associated with fertility and the harvest

Freyja is known for her promiscuity, but the only time this is really negatively portrayed is in the poem *The Insults of Loki* (which has been read as a Christian mockery of the gods). She is coveted by the giants, probably because of her association with fertility, and protected just as jealously by the gods – but she is not controlled by anyone. It's quite fitting that she is associated with cats in the mythology because she has that same fierce independence and tendency to toy with her lovers. The fact she cries golden tears for her long-missing husband perhaps shows a different side to this most powerful goddess.

Freyr is the male counterpart to Freyja, associated with fertility and the harvest. The only complete story about him to survive doesn't cast him in a very good light, as it involves sending a servant to threaten a beautiful giantess into marrying him against her will. He was probably as important as Thor to the rural population of Scandinavia, with a good harvest essential for them to survive the long winter.



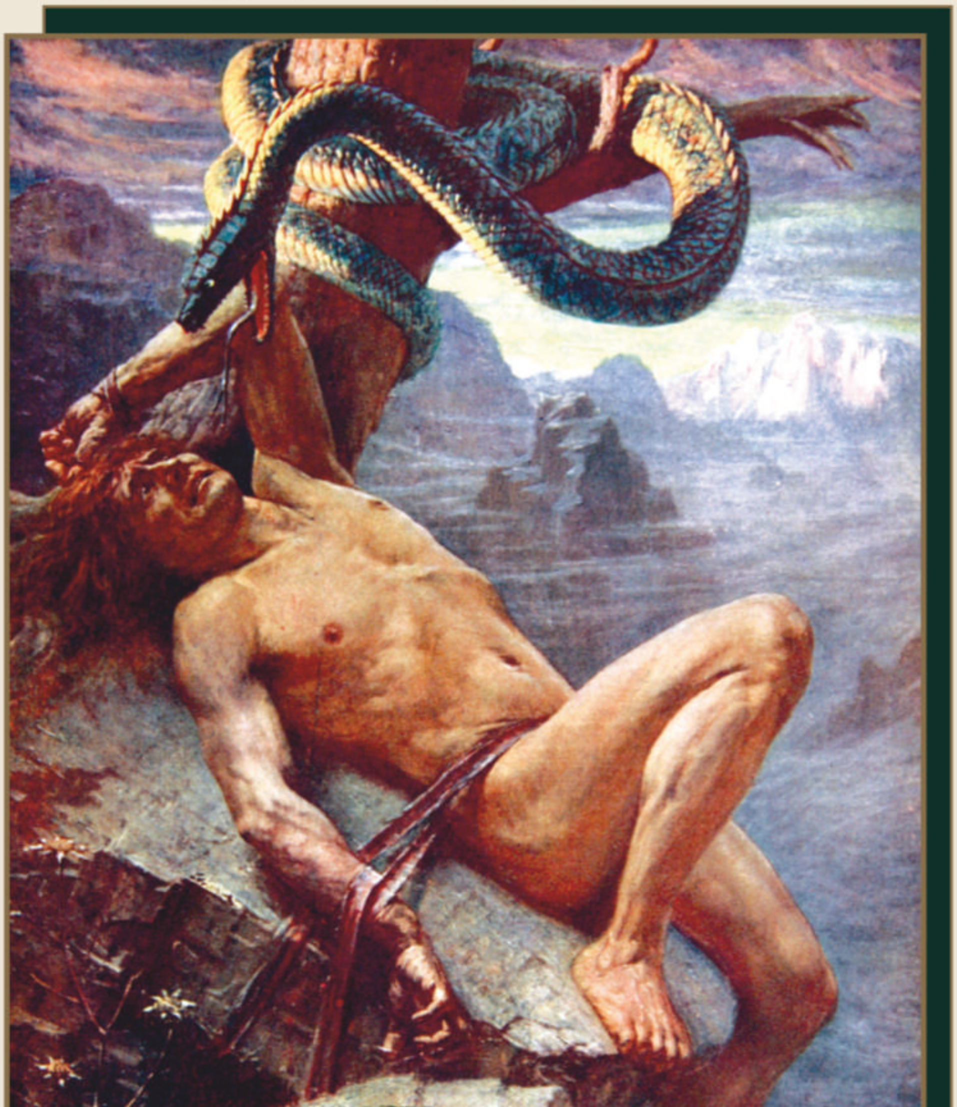
LOKI

Loki does not seem to have been worshipped as a god: there's some doubt about whether he's a god at all, his father being of giant stock (a clear taboo in the world of Norse myth). He plays many different roles in the stories that survive, from a helpful and wily sidekick to Thor, to a devious and spiteful figure who creates chaos for the sheer thrill of it. Sometimes this chaos is productive – cutting the hair from the head of the goddess Sif leads to six precious gifts being made for the gods in compensation – but his actions are also deeply harmful at times. His most infamous act is orchestrating the killing of the 'perfect' god Baldr with a mistletoe dart, after which Loki becomes a pariah, imprisoned beneath a venom-dripping snake until the end of the world. He's deeply implicated in the end of the world as well, fathering several of the monsters that will attack the gods and destroy Asgard in the final reckoning, Loki himself participating on the side of the giants.

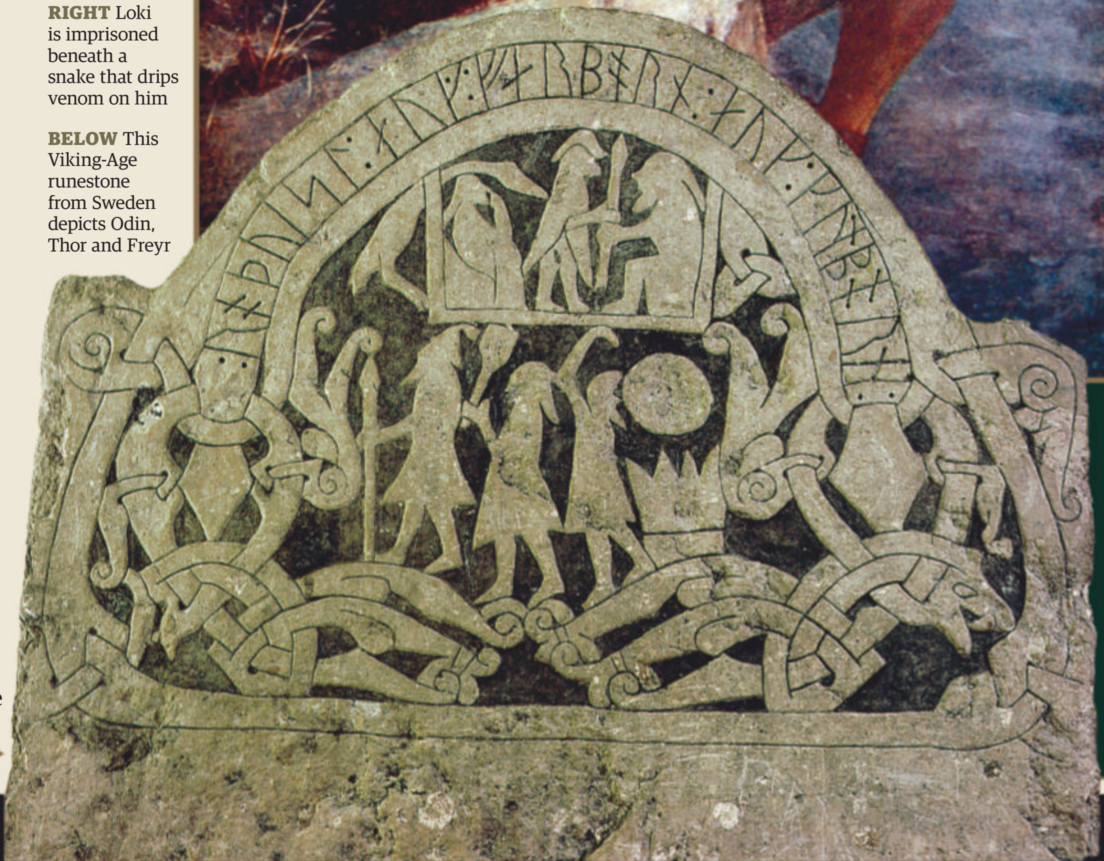
> "THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT GODS WORSHIPPED BY THE NORSE PEOPLES WERE ODIN, THOR AND FREYR"

A VERY HUMAN FAMILY

Norse mythology does not shy away from the gritty side of human existence: the myth of the origins of poetry, for example, is a story involving spit, blood, vomit and excrement. The Norse gods also put their bodies on the line in a way that the Greek gods do not. Many of them are missing body parts: Tyr, a war-like god whose English equivalent Tiw gave his name to Tuesday, is famous for putting his hand in the jaws of the wolf Fenrir and having it bitten off at the wrist. Heimdall, the watchman of the gods and guardian of the rainbow bridge to Asgard, seems to have sacrificed an ear for his supernatural hearing and is described by Snorri as having golden teeth. Höd, the son of Odin and hapless killer of Baldr, is blind. Mimir is nothing more than a preserved head, whose value lies in the wisdom he still imparts to Odin. One of the redeeming features of ▶



RIGHT Loki is imprisoned beneath a snake that drips venom on him



BELOW This Viking-Age runestone from Sweden depicts Odin, Thor and Freyr

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

the Norse gods is that these differences are not negatively portrayed, and are often praised.

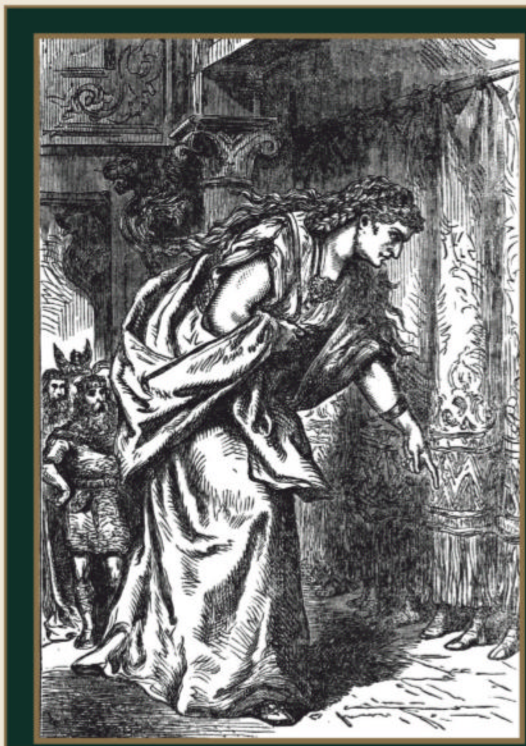
Their behaviours are similarly human. The sea god Njörd and mountain giantess Skadi are trapped in a loveless and resentful marriage. Frigg, the most powerful of the goddesses (and still honoured by our Friday, or Frigg's Day) is said to wield powerful magic and to aid in childbirth. She is a protective mother for her son Baldr, though she bickers with her unfaithful husband Odin and tricks him into getting captured and barbecued by a powerful king. Freyr and his sister Freyja were conceived through incest, and may also have practised this taboo themselves.

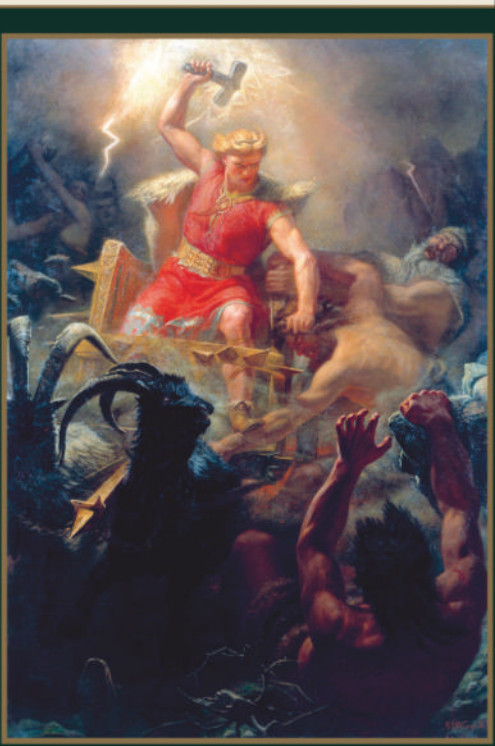
> "THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GODS AND THE GIANTS IS MORE COMPLEX THAN A SIMPLE BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL"

As questionable as these behaviours are, they pale in comparison with the way that the gods treat the giants. The gods cheat and steal and commit acts of gratuitous violence against the ancestors of Ymir: their authority doesn't derive from their moral superiority or from some particular awesome supernatural power, but from their position as bulwarks against an even more destructive force: the chaos of nature.

THE GIANT ADVERSARIES

The relationship between the gods and the giants is more complex than a simple battle between good and evil. The giants are sometimes depicted as a more primitive civilisation and are often associated with more rudimentary technology: the giant Hrungnir wields a stone shield and whetstone against Thor's metal hammer, for example. But they also own objects that the gods desire and seem unable to make themselves, such as a giant cauldron for brewing beer, and possess wisdom from an older time. Most desirable of all are giant women, who are taken as wives and thus become 'elevated' to the position of goddesses. Examples of this are Thor's mother Jörd and Freyr's wife Gerd. Such intermarriage suggests something more along the lines of a relationship between tribes, with the gods in the ascendant position.



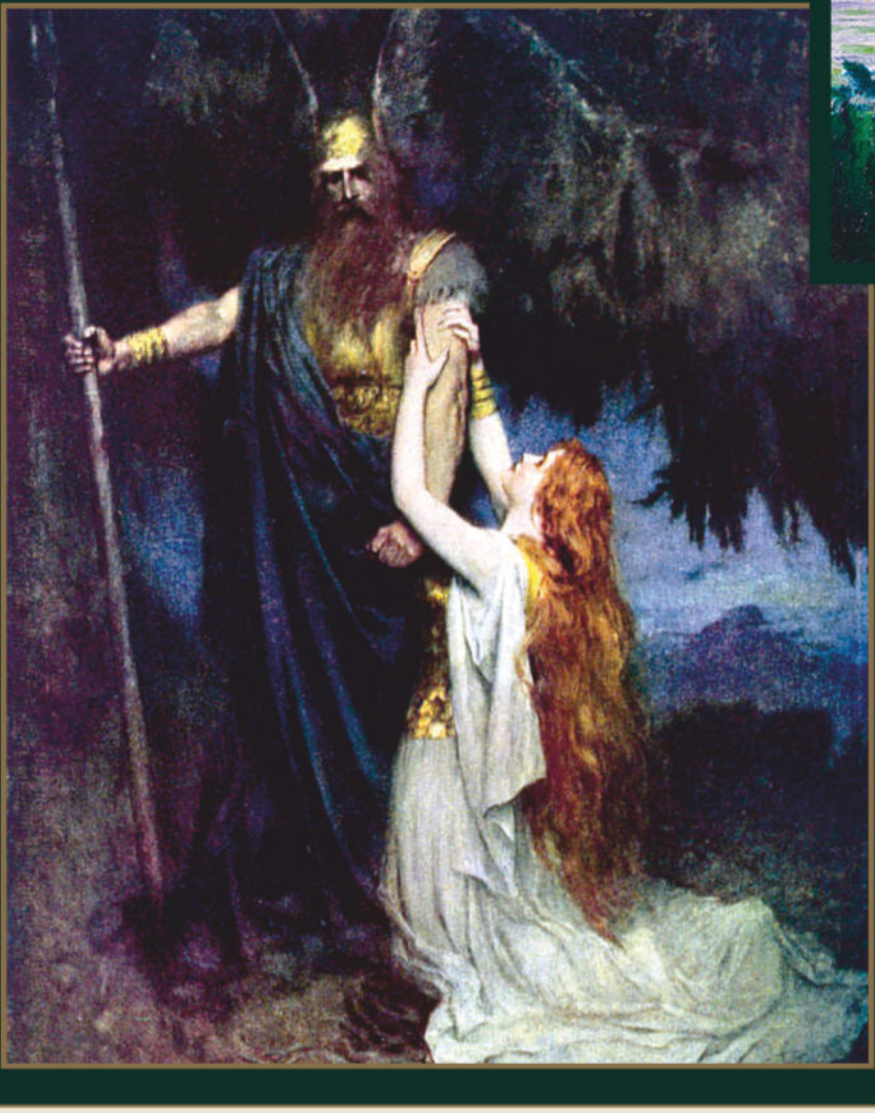


ABOVE The giantess Skadi chooses her husband from the gods

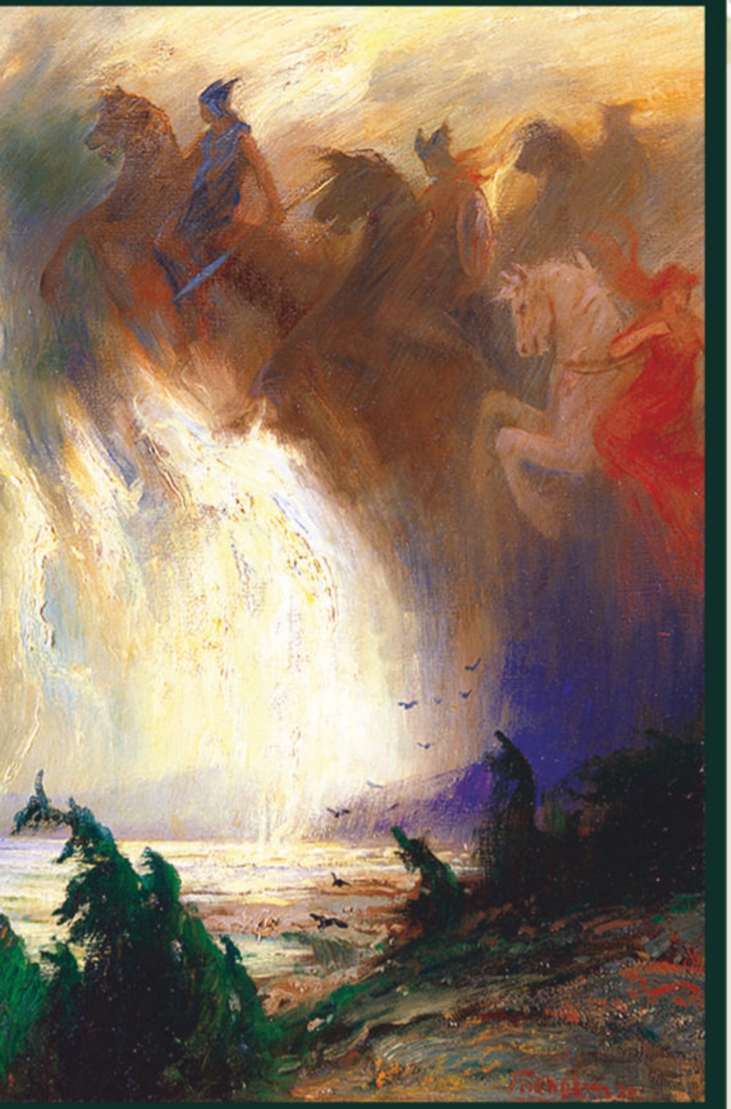
ABOVE-MIDDLE All-action Thor wields his hammer Mjölnir as he battles the giants

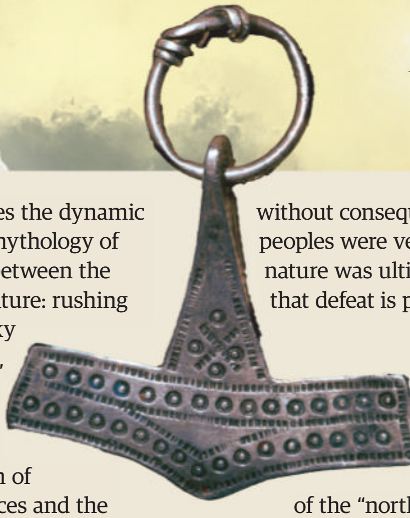
ABOVE-RIGHT *Ride of the Valkyries* by Hermann Hendrich, 1906

FAR-RIGHT Ninth-century pendant depicting Thor's hammer, most likely worn around the neck and possibly in imitation of the Christian crucifix



RIGHT Odin punishes the Valkyrie Brunnhilde for her defiance





However, this ignores the dynamic seen throughout the mythology of the close association between the giants and forces of nature: rushing water, rough seas, rocky terrains, icy lava fields, wildfires. If giantesses are brought into the family of the gods, it may be a recognition of the power of these forces and the desire to harness and control them. One particularly illuminating episode comes when Thor tries to cross a river that is swollen by a giantess urinating upstream: he throws a rock and euphemistically 'plugs the source'. This is a graphic illustration of the fact that mountain streams were personified as giantesses, and that the gods use a masculine power to control these dangerous forces. It's easy to imagine Norse travellers invoking Thor before crossing a similarly treacherous stream.

If this dynamic seems violent and exploitative, that's because it is: the gods control an often feminised the natural world in order to benefit from nature's power while also keeping it in check. In a world where a hailstorm could ruin the harvest, or a hearth fire left unattended lead to the burning of a settlement, the illusion of control the gods offer must have been comforting. However, it's wrong to think of this relationship between gods and giants as simply one of exploitation without consequence. The Norse peoples were very aware that control of nature was ultimately an illusion and that defeat is predicted for the gods.

RAGNARÖK

The Lord of the Rings author JRR Tolkien described the strength of the "northern mythological imagination" lying in the fact that they gave their monsters victory and found a "potent but terrible solution in naked will and courage."

Ragnarök, the final destiny of the gods, is in many ways a rebalancing of the violence against the giants with which the world started, and a long-delayed revenge for the unsustainable exploitation of the natural world. There would be a final battle in which the forces of chaos would overwhelm the alliance of gods and human heroes, and destroy the world. There was no escaping this fate, but it didn't stop them trying. Odin sent his Valkyries to choose the boldest of the slain warriors to join him in Valhalla and prepare for the battle that they would lose. While this concept, and the worldview that must have accompanied it, has been called fatalistic, it was perhaps more honest than some systems of belief. What are modern apocalypse narratives if not a rerun of that same theme: the

▶

FIRE AND ICE

How Iceland's landscape influenced the myths

Norse settlers brought their belief system and tales of the Norse gods to Iceland in the Viking Age, and it was in this outpost of the Viking world that the stories were preserved for the longest. For the first settlers encountering Iceland's volcanically active landscapes – and experiencing earth tremors, steaming vents and lava flows – it must have seemed like they had entered the realm of the giants. It almost certainly had an impact on the way the myths play out in the Icelandic sources: giants are described as "lava whales", creation is configured as the meeting of fire and ice, and the fire-giant Surt reads like a personification of magma erupting from beneath the earth.

The influence of the landscape is particularly evident in the depiction of Ragnarök, described in several Old Norse-Icelandic poems, and more extensively by 13th century mythographer Snorri Sturluson. The details of the cataclysm – steam and smoke blotting out the stars, fire consuming the land, volcanic floods – would have been all too easy to imagine for Icelanders, who would have also seen how cooled lava soon grew green again with moss. It's fitting that a volcanic island that emerged from the sea off the south coast of Iceland in the 1960s is called Surtsey, after the fire giant who burns the world. It's also fitting that its terrain of black lava is now colonised by animals and plants, grown green like the world reborn after Ragnarök.

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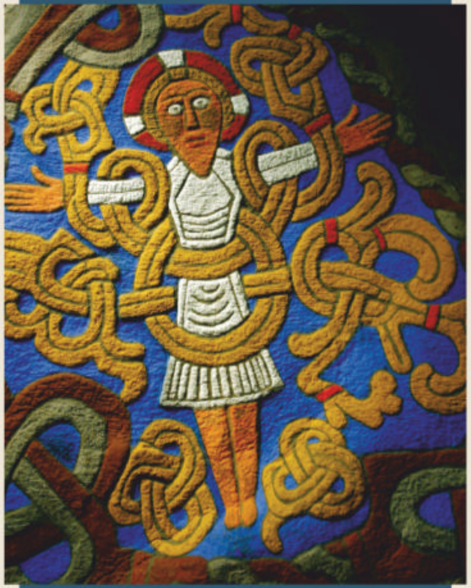
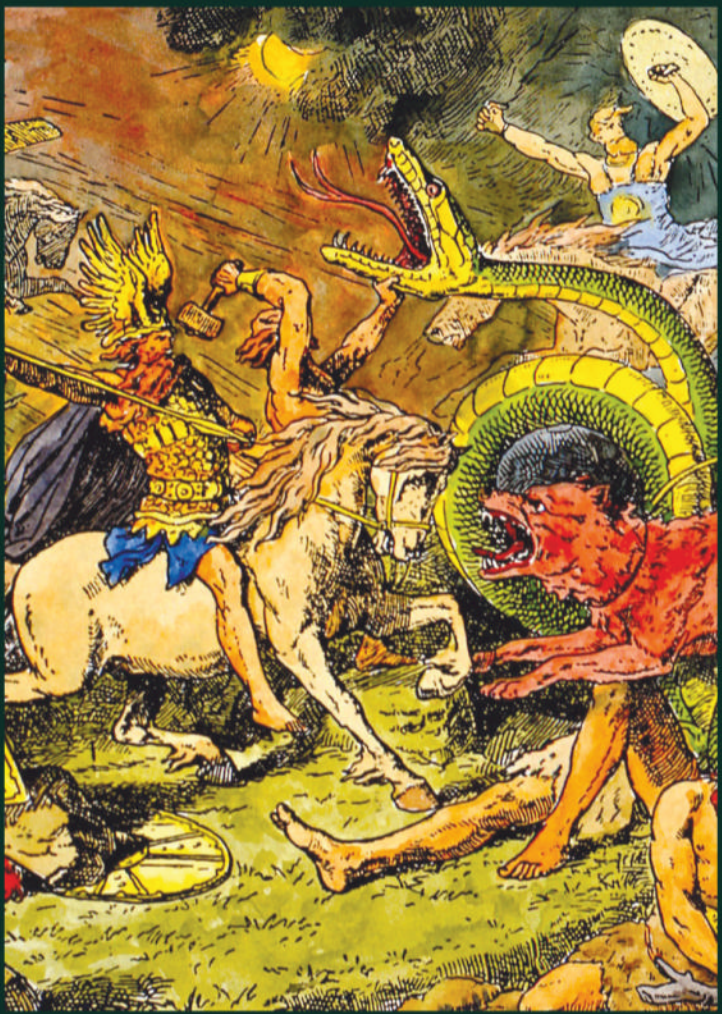
CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES

Norse myths didn't exist in a vacuum



Literary accounts of Norse mythology almost all derive from a period some 200 to 300 years after the Christianisation of Iceland, and scholars have different opinions on how much the surviving myths have been influenced by the Christian narrative. For example, it's reasonably clear that in the mythological poem *Völuspá* the stanza referencing the coming of a "Mighty One" to the resurrected world has been added to the poem and is a reference to the coming of Christ. But other influences are harder to identify.

Odin is first mentioned in a runic inscription on an early 5th-century bracteate (ornamental disc) from Vindelev, Denmark, so he is demonstrably an old god. But is the fact that Odin is given a role as the 'All-Father' in the medieval sources a response to monotheism? Is the death of Baldr and his resurrection after Ragnarök influenced by the resurrection of Christ? Of course, contact with Christianity may also have influenced myth and ritual during the Viking Age: it's been suggested, for example, that the Thor's hammer pendants found in Viking Age burials were developed in imitation of the Christian crucifix. It's telling that some finds from the Viking Age clearly depict legendary or mythical figures that are hard to identify using the written sources, suggesting that beliefs evolved rapidly during this period.



smallness of humans in an impersonal and hostile universe? With modern scientific knowledge, we know that the sun will eventually burn itself out and the world will end, if an asteroid or human-caused catastrophe doesn't do the job sooner. The Norse peoples, often living in the harshest of environments, understood the fragility of existence more intuitively.

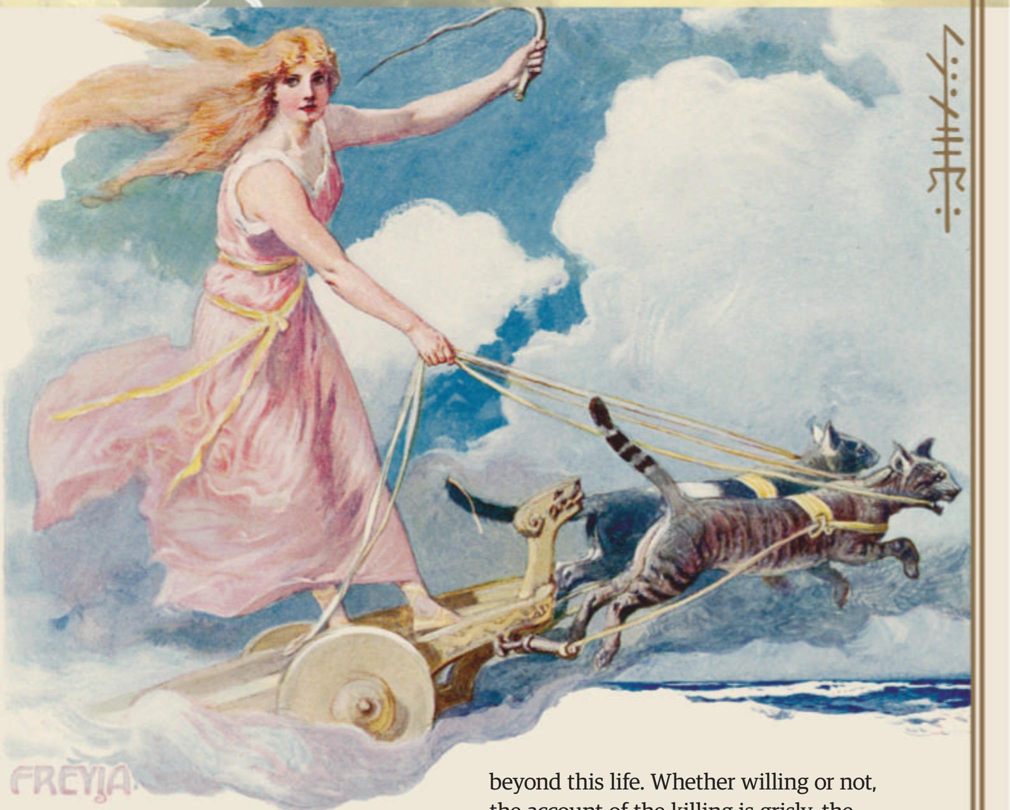
The Norse apocalypse begins with what is best described as a great social unravelling: laws and behaviours break down, brothers kill brothers in great wars, incest is rife and bonds of kinship are broken. A great three-year winter follows, appropriate to the northern world from which these myths evolved. Giant wolves will swallow the sun and moon, earthquakes will cause all chains to break – including those holding Loki and his sons, the monstrous wolf Fenrir and the Midgard-Serpent – long confined to the ocean. The sky splits and the sons of Muspell surge through the opening led by Surt, a fire giant with a flaming sword. They will reach Asgard via the rainbow bridge, burning it in the process. A boat made of nail clippings brings other giant forces into play, and the ensuing battle will see most of the gods killed: Odin by the wolf Fenrir, Thor by the Midgard Serpent, Freyr by Surt. Loki and Heimdall fight to the death on opposing sides, and Tyr is brought down by the monstrous hound Garm. The whole world is put to flame, the stars are blotted out and the world sinks into the ocean, only to be born again as a green land inherited by those few children of the gods who survive the cataclysm. It is unclear if this rebirth of a cleansed land raises the possibility of things being done differently a second time, or if the cycle of exploitation and catastrophic revenge will simply repeat itself: a dynamic as intrinsic to life as the seasons in the north.

NORSE WORSHIP

Our knowledge of the Norse gods comes almost exclusively from Christian writers, particularly from Snorri Sturluson, an Icelandic poet, politician and historian writing in the first half of the 13th century. While he was invested in recording the stories that underpinned traditional poetic craft, he wasn't really interested in how the ancestors worshipped their gods. Some of the gaps he leaves in his account suggest that he was actively avoiding anything that could be construed as ritual practice or pagan worship. For example, though he must have known the story, he doesn't relate Odin's self-sacrifice to gain knowledge of the runes, perhaps because this was too deeply connected with pagan worship. Or perhaps it was a little too close to the crucifixion narrative for comfort, as Odin is pierced by a spear and denied food and drink as he hangs from a gallows tree. It has been speculated that this might have been how sacrifices were made in honour of Odin, but it's not much to go on.

TOP-LEFT Heimdall blows the Gjallarhorn to warn the gods of the approach of Ragnarök. From the 10th-century Jurby cross-slab, Isle of Man

BOTTOM-LEFT Ragnarök sees the forces of chaos overwhelm the alliance of gods and humans



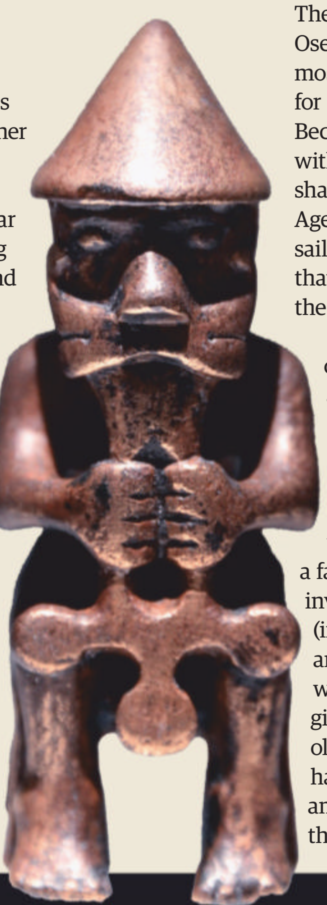
RIGHT Fiercely independent (and promiscuous) Freyja is often associated with cats in Norse mythology

The sagas are not much more reliable when it comes to depicting pagan practices centuries in the past. There are references to shrines and temples dedicated to the gods, and to feasts held to mark different occasions. A wooden effigy of the god Freyr was paraded around the countryside in a cart, according to one late saga. The account of the conversion of Iceland states that pagans had the right to continue eating horse meat and exposing infants (abandoning unwanted babies to die in the cold), suggesting that these practices were important to the old religion. Another tradition referenced repeatedly in the sagas is the carrying of so-called 'high seat pillars' (perhaps effigies of particular deities) on the ships of those emigrating to Iceland, throwing them overboard and founding a settlement wherever they washed ashore.

> "OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE NORSE GODS COMES ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY FROM CHRISTIAN WRITERS"

The chronicler Adam of Bremen was writing in the 1080s at a time when worship of the old gods was still very much alive in Sweden, and he paints a picture of a pagan temple centred on enthroned statues of Odin, Thor and Freyr, which may have featured on a smaller scale in halls and homes across Scandinavia. There is reason to be suspicious about the details of his account, but his mention of the statue of Fricco (or Freyr) being depicted with an erect phallus is paralleled in a small statuette from Rällinge in central Sweden.

BELOW The Eyrarland statuette depicting Thor dates to 1000, around the time Iceland adopted Christianity



We know a bit more about funereal practices from the archaeological record. Both cremation and burial – including ship burial – were practised. Sometimes these burials were lavish affairs, including the sacrifice of animals, the dressing of the deceased in finery, and the interring of grave goods ranging from weapons to personal grooming kits. The famous ship burials such as those at Oseberg and Gokstad were probably the most extravagant of all and were reserved for only the most important in society. Because some individuals were buried within ship settings (stones laid out in the shape of a ship) and because some Viking Age picture stones seem to depict the dead sailing on ships, it has been speculated that the ship was an important symbol of the passage from death to life.

Perhaps our most elaborate account of pagan burial practices comes from an unlikely source: an emissary from Baghdad to the peoples around the Volga River. Ibn Fadlan's account of his time among the Rus' (Scandinavians who settled the river routes from the Baltic to the Black Sea) includes a famous account of a ship burial. This involves the sacrifice of various animals (including two horses run until they are sweaty before being butchered) as well as a human sacrifice of a slave girl who volunteers to be killed by an old woman – the Angel of Death – after having sex with the most important among the mourners and being lifted three times above a door frame to see beyond this life. Whether willing or not, the account of the killing is grisly, the intoxicated and belatedly reluctant girl strangled while the Angel of Death stabs her between the ribs, the men beating on their shields to drown out the screams. The ship and the site of this grim spectacle is set alight and a mound built over the ashes.

What role the gods had in these funerary rites is not known, but of course burial with weapons would allow dead warriors (einherjar) to make use of these swords and spears in Valhalla, when they feasted and sparred with the other einherjar in preparation for the final battle on the side of Odin, Thor and one-handed Tyr. ○

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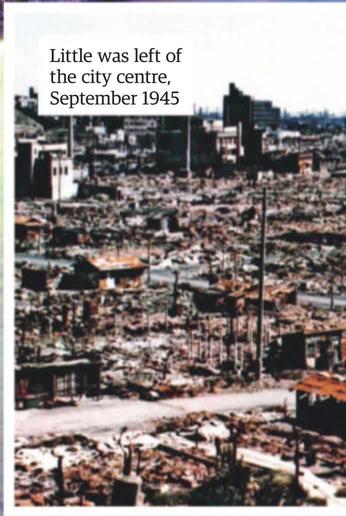
REBUILDING HIROSHIMA

Written by Jonathan Gordon

Eighty years after atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, the resurrection of one of its cities remains remarkable



Little was left of the city centre, September 1945

> **“THE GOVERNMENT MADE RESTORING HIROSHIMA A NATIONAL MISSION THAT REPRESENTED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW JAPAN”**

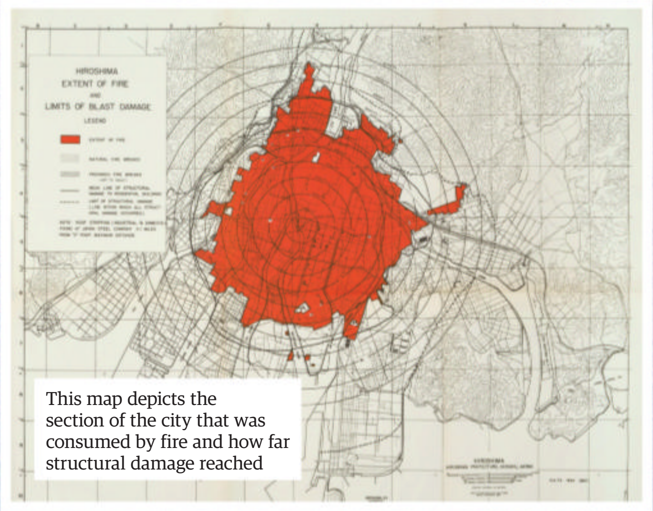
Walking around Hiroshima today, you will find a modern, bustling metropolis. Its wide main streets and high-rise buildings are evidence of a city of industry and commercial success. In some places, it's hard to believe that 80 years ago it was decimated by an atomic explosion. But Hiroshima holds tight to this legacy and, from the first days after the detonation, the city has charted a new path. It set its sights on a new future while openly wearing some of its scars as a vivid reminder of the destruction humanity can inflict upon itself.

The Bomb

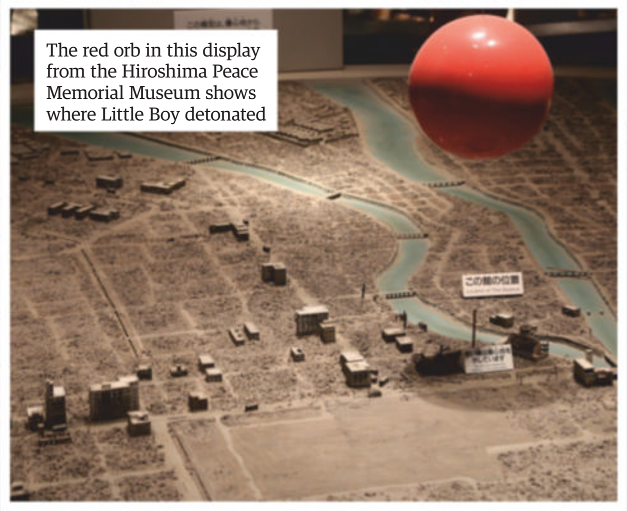
At 8:15am on 6 August 1945 an atomic bomb, dubbed Little Boy, was dropped on Hiroshima by a United States Air Force B-29 Superfortress heavy bomber named the Enola Gay. It detonated at 580 metres above the city, instantly killing between 60,000 and 80,000 people, with a final death toll of 135,000 from injuries, radiation sickness and other effects (about one-third of the 420,000 population). A few days later on 9 August, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Hiroshima was chosen as the Allies' primary bombing target because it was the home of the Japanese Second Army and therefore considered a major military asset. Its history dates back to the construction of Hiroshima Castle (1589) and the town that was built up around it. It wasn't until modernisation during the Meiji Restoration, from 1868, that investment in the area saw the town grow into a city. It was then made an administrative hub and garrison for the Japanese Army. Its port also made it an important location for the country's navy, while a trainline direct to Tokyo made it useful for troop deployment. The city even acted as the capital of the nation during the First China-Japan War (1894-95).

This is all to say that Hiroshima was a well-established, historic city of great cultural, economic and military significance before the atomic bomb was dropped. More than 10-square-kilometres of the city were flattened by the detonation and subsequent fires. About 90 percent of Hiroshima's buildings, many made from wood as was common across Japan, were either burned, burning or completely destroyed within the first 30 minutes. Only a handful of concrete structures managed to withstand the enormous blast and subsequent firestorm. ▶



This map depicts the section of the city that was consumed by fire and how far structural damage reached



The red orb in this display from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum shows where Little Boy detonated

Images © Alamy, Getty

Hiroshima today is a city transformed

A quick response

Despite the carnage, attempts to get the city back on its feet began almost immediately. Power started returning to parts of Hiroshima on 7 August, the day after the bombing, and most remaining homes had electricity restored by November 1945. Some key transformer stations had suffered only minor damage and could be repaired relatively quickly. This recovery effort was in part thanks to the work of people from neighbouring towns and cities who risked their lives to offer assistance. Rail services continued to run in and out of the city, bringing in volunteers and vital aid, and the first priority was reconnecting power and water supplies to ensure essential services were available.

The shock wave of the bomb had badly damaged water pipes, with an estimated 80 percent of the city's water being lost to leakage. Many people were resorting to using river water, but this would have been contaminated in the immediate aftermath of the atomic explosion, posing major health risks. New wells and pumps were established to supplement supplies while repairs were made to the pipe network.

These kinds of logistical problems were the main concern, even more so than radioactivity, which was subsiding quickly. Managing the crisis and organising people was vital but of the municipal government's 1,000 employees, only 80 were able to report for duty after the blast. Fourteen of Hiroshima's 16 hospitals had been destroyed, 198 hospital doctors were dead, and 1,654 out of 1,780 registered nurses were also lost.

However, thanks to survivors and volunteers from nearby towns, around 99 medical stations were set up in Hiroshima within 24 hours of the bombing and another 240 were established just outside the city. A massive effort was also undertaken to quickly bury the dead to reduce the risk of disease. Even so, the health impact on survivors, known as hibakusha, would be an issue for years to come, with cancer being a long-term health concern for many.

The US set up the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) in November 1946 to track how the atomic blast had caused various health issues, such as cancers, developmental disorders and other ailments. ABCC offices were established in Hiroshima and Nagasaki but did not offer medical treatment – only assessment and analysis.

City of Peace

Once Japan had officially surrendered to the Allies, on 2 September 1945, and the occupation of the country had begun, reconstruction efforts gathered pace. The British Commonwealth Occupation Force arrived in Hiroshima in 1946 but did not assist the reconstruction directly – with its headquarters in the port city of Kure it was responsible for vital supply chains. The primary

RECONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

How the city rose from the ashes

6 AUGUST 1945
Atomic bomb Little Boy is dropped by the US Air Force and detonated over Hiroshima.

9 AUGUST 1945
Street cars resume a partial service around Hiroshima, helping move people around the city.

SEPTEMBER 1945
The Red Cross arrives, led by Dr Marcel Junod, bringing in an estimated 15 tonnes of medical supplies.

DECEMBER 1945
Mazda resumes production of the Batanko, a three-wheeled truck pivotal to moving supplies around Hiroshima.

APRIL 1946
The reconstruction plan for Hiroshima is approved.

6 AUGUST 1947
The first Peace Festival is held in Hiroshima in what becomes Peace Memorial Park.

AUGUST 1949
Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Act passed by Japanese government to fund rebuilding efforts.

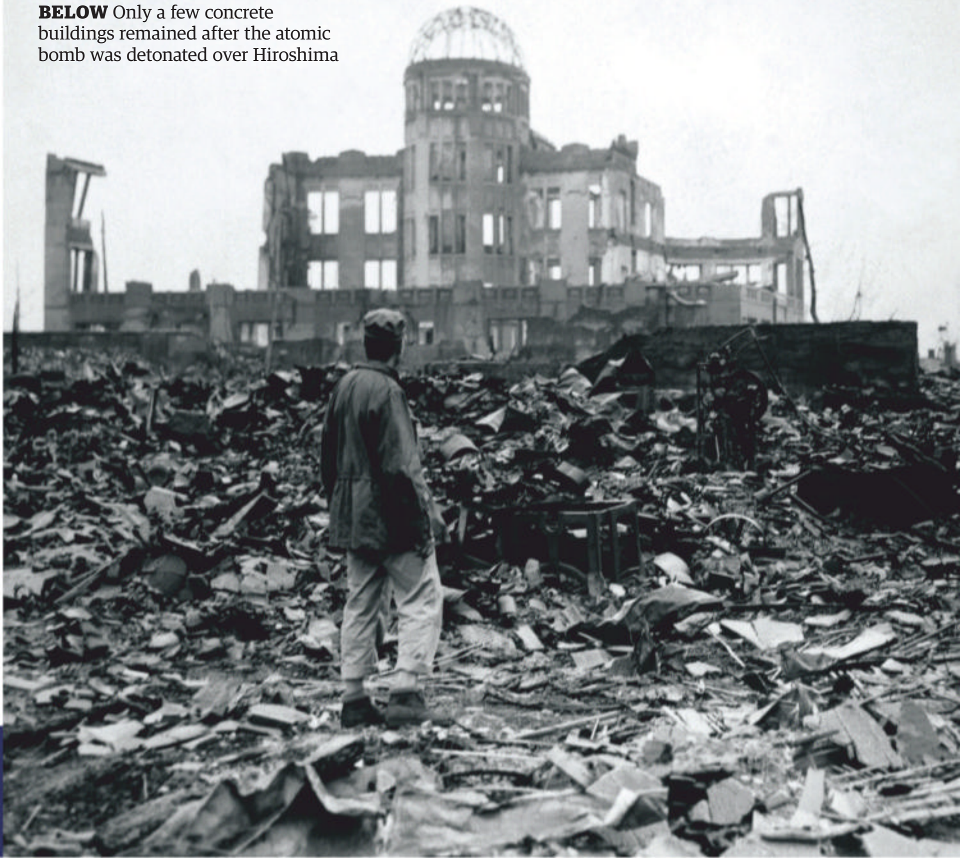
OCTOBER 1951
Peace Memorial Boulevard opens as a stretch of greenbelt in the heart of the city.

AUGUST 1952
Cenotaph to the victims of the atomic bomb is completed.

JANUARY 1953
Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Survivors' Treatment Council is formed to care for survivors and provide free or subsidised treatment.

AUGUST 1955
First world Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Hiroshima.

JULY 1966
The city council votes to preserve what's known as the A-Bomb Dome.



BELOW Only a few concrete buildings remained after the atomic bomb was detonated over Hiroshima

concern of the Western powers, at least until 1948, was the political reorganisation of the country.

It was largely left to the people of Hiroshima and the rest of the country to decide what was to become of this historic city, and the idea of reshaping it from a military centre into a City of Peace quickly gained traction. As early as 1946, citizens were being asked for their vision of what Hiroshima could be. Poet and peace activist Sankichi Tōge won a local competition for one such vision with his idea for a peace plaza memorial, library and museum, with 40 percent of the city covered in greenery. The concept was popular, but funding would be challenging.

In 1949 the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law was passed by the national government, advocating for Hiroshima to be a region of Japan "symbolising the human idea of the sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace." New funding paths were opened up and state-owned land, including military land, was given to the city.

The government had made restoring Hiroshima a national mission that represented the beginning of a new Japan while also acting as a symbol of what its people could achieve together against huge odds. Massive subsidies were provided by the state to supplement everything from debris collection to housing construction. It wasn't universally popular, however, as prioritising Hiroshima was seen by some to be diverting funds from other places. Additionally, the law gave local authorities a lot of power to procure land and push forward with construction, which in many cases clashed with the hopes of citizens whose businesses or homes had previously occupied those locations.

Illegal housing, particularly along the river banks in the centre of the city, was a particularly thorny issue. Many of these residents had lost their homes in the bombing and had nowhere else to go. An estimated 3,000 people were living in this area and needed to be relocated to social housing. The effort to build more homes took some time, but made steady progress. One famous complex, known as the Motomachi residential area, had 1,800 homes ready by 1949, but wouldn't be complete until 1978.

As Tōge had envisioned, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park was built in the heart of the city with a museum, conference hall and cenotaph. Designed by architect Kenzō Tange, the Memorial Park was completed by the end of the 1950s, as was the reconstruction of Hiroshima's historic castle. The Memorial ▶

ABOVE-LEFT The community rallied to support many needs, such as education and social welfare

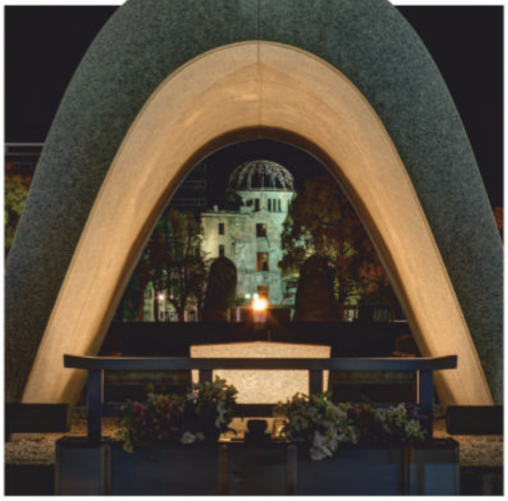
ABOVE-MIDDLE By 1959 the business district of Hiroshima looked like any other modern Japanese city

ABOVE-RIGHT This photo taken in 1954 shows how much of the city was quickly rebuilt

BELOW The A-Bomb Dome is a reminder in the heart of Hiroshima of what the city has come back from

Images © Alamy, Getty

> "AROUND 99 MEDICAL STATIONS WERE SET UP IN HIROSHIMA WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE BOMBING"



ABOVE The Cenotaph for the Victims of the Atomic Bomb holds the names of all those who died

ABOVE, RIGHT Hiroshima Castle was rebuilt in 1958

Park, built right under where the bomb had detonated, had previously been the city's busy downtown district but was recast as a 122,000-square-metre public space. Turning such a valuable central area into a park was an important symbolic element of the reconstruction.

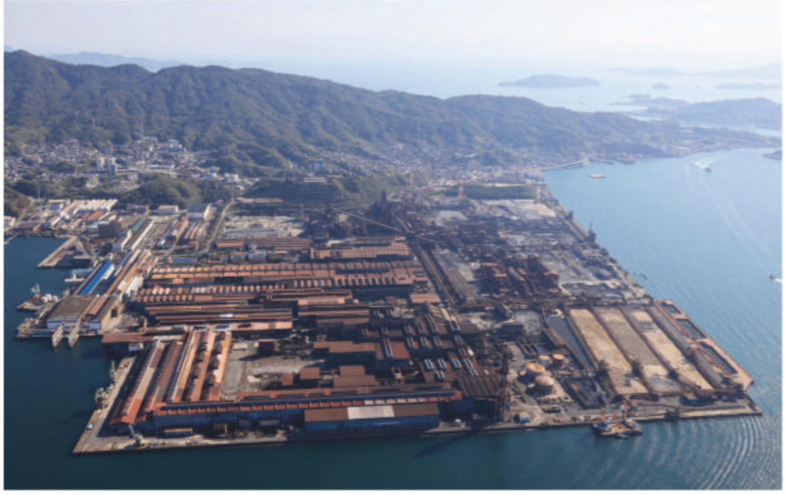
The rest of the city was reconstructed marrying the best of Eastern and Western design. While recovering from such a devastating attack was unique for the island nation, centuries of living with seismic activity and other natural disasters meant there was a long tradition of revival and rebuilding. Structures were frequently designed to be restored and renewed by subsequent generations. In fact, there had actually been a plan to modernise Hiroshima penned in 1919, and some residents thought that most of what remained of the old city should be completely swept away. Others were keen to retain something from the nuclear attack as a reminder of what they had contended with. Today the most prominent testament of the bombing is a building known as the A-bomb Dome, formerly the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall. Some considered it an ugly reminder of the pain the city had experienced, but it was officially recognised in Japan in 1966 and made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. It's one of only a handful of locations in the city from 1945 left largely untouched.

WAS HIROSHIMA RADIOACTIVE?

Why it was safe to return earlier than you might think

Little Boy was a much smaller bomb than the nuclear weapons developed during the Cold War arms race after 1945. As a result, while more than powerful enough to level Hiroshima, it didn't emit the levels of radioactivity generated by later bombs. People in close proximity to the explosion were exposed to very high levels of radiation, with varying amounts of exposure further away depending on environmental conditions. Survivors of the bombing suffered from a range of horrible short- and long-term effects from this exposure, most notably in the form of various cancers that began emerging a couple of years later. Some children conceived before the bombing also suffered developmental issues. A report on this by the University of Columbia in 2012 concluded that there was no evidence of pronounced radiation-related disease in children conceived after the bombing, which shows how quickly radiation levels in the devastated city subsided.

An important factor in this is that the bomb did not detonate on the ground, but in the air, with the vast majority of the radiation absorbed into the atmosphere and dispersed. This also meant that neutron activation, when non-radioactive materials are made radioactive when caught in an atomic blast, did not occur. What little physical material from the bomb landed on the ground was highly toxic but was thankfully washed away relatively quickly by rain. Remarkably, radiation had returned to normal levels within a month of the bombing. The first proof of this for citizens of Hiroshima was that oleander flowers (kyochikuto in Japanese) began growing the following spring, becoming the official flower of the reborn city.



ABOVE-LEFT Only two years after the bombing, reconstruction was well under way in many areas

ABOVE-RIGHT The iron works were rebuilt in 1951, bringing much-needed jobs and investment

BELOW By 1949 there were still signs of damage, but also of massive redevelopment

Community action

While the government directed reconstruction of the civic spaces and other property, it was largely left to the people to rebuild community and social apparatus. Children who had been evacuated to the countryside during the war were now returning, but only a few school buildings remained standing. Local educators began running shifts in the mornings and afternoons for different groups so that everyone could receive educational support, with parents banding together to help fund these efforts.

Additionally, a council of 'war victims' associations' was set up to help manage the distribution of lumber, nails and glass panes so people could rebuild their homes in the face of supply shortages. This council also arranged care for orphans and provided bathhouses and community housing. Food supply problems became so acute, however, that in the summer of 1946 about 50,000 people were evacuated back to the countryside by the government and food relief was offered in those areas.

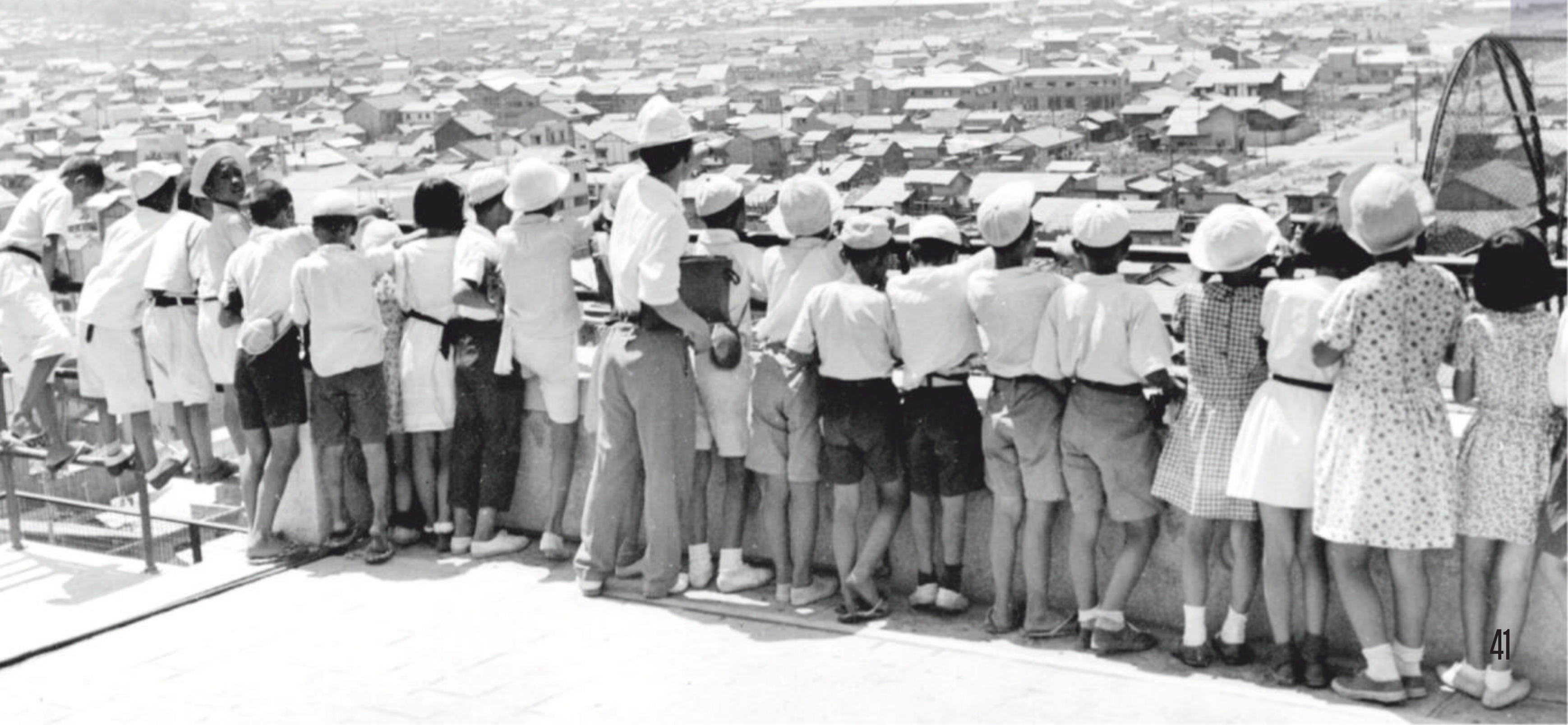
One particularly remarkable aspect of Hiroshima's recovery is that financial services returned to the shattered city within just a few days of the bombing. Staff from the Bank of Japan reopened their building, damaged by fire but still standing, and allowed staff from other banks to offer services from their location. As such, loans and insurance could be arranged, allowing residents and business owners to get to work rebuilding their lives far more quickly than might otherwise have been the case.

The economic recovery of Japan became the focus of the Allies too from 1948 when Cold War concerns about communist influence took hold. Getting Japanese industry back on its feet became a priority and Hiroshima, as a former industrial powerhouse, was primed to take up its part. War in Korea from 1950 opened up demand for exports from Japan in a major way, and the island nation acted as the key supply location for United Nations forces in Korea, which was a massive boon to the economy. This also made Japan an important military hub, meaning that the US was essentially guaranteeing its security. By 1958 the population of Hiroshima was already back up to 410,000 people, which in itself brought in more business and greater tax revenues.

Hiroshima is a city remade and reborn. It held its first Peace Festival on the anniversary of the atomic bombing in 1947 and has held it nearly every year since, calling for nuclear disarmament and world peace. The city also hosted the 49th G7 Summit in May 2023 and saw foreign visitor numbers grow to about 500,000 in the following year. In 2024 the Peace Memorial Museum received over two million visitors, about 30 percent of whom are thought to have been from overseas. Today, the population of Hiroshima is more than one million. ○

Images © Alamy, Getty

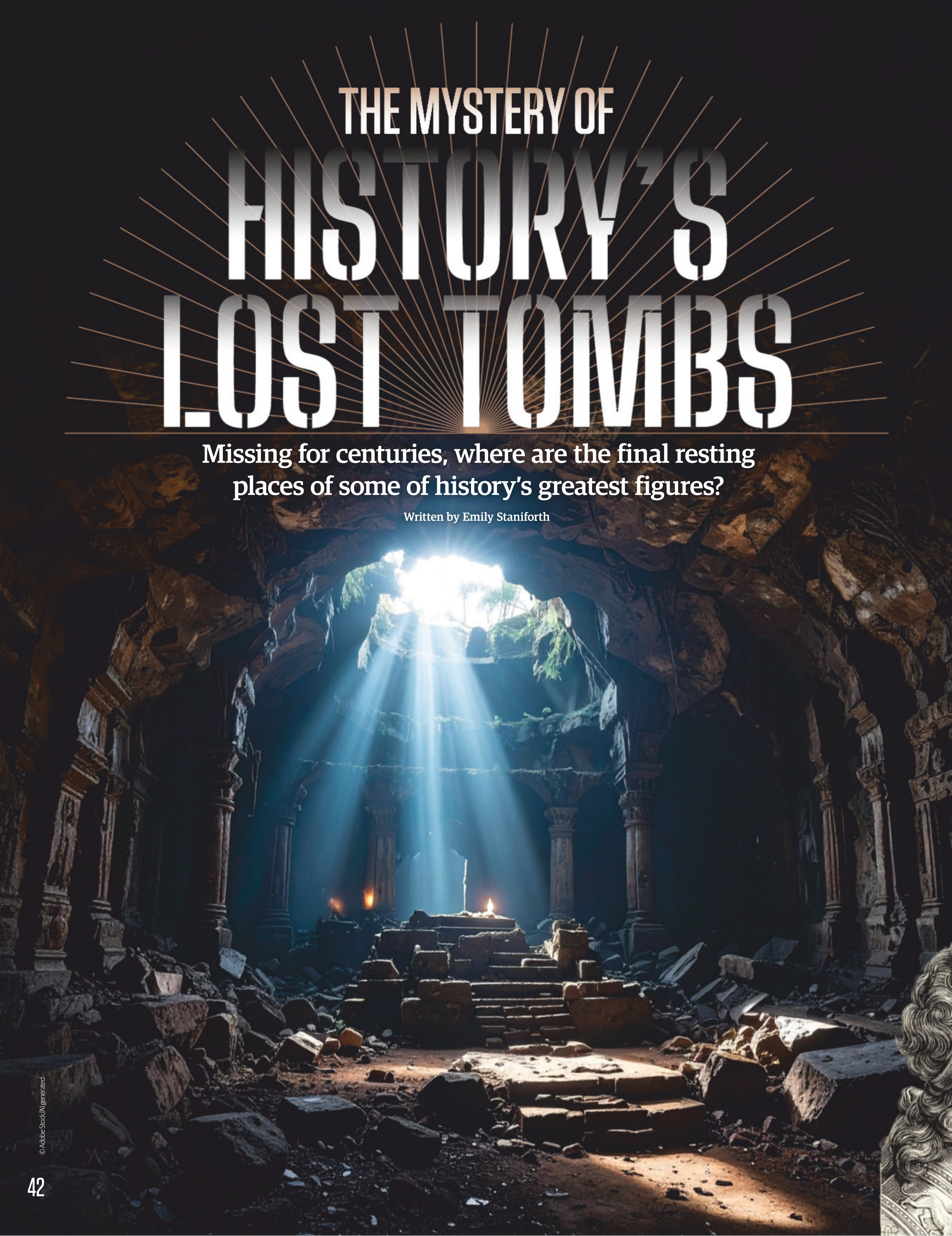
"RADIATION HAD RETURNED TO NORMAL LEVELS WITHIN A MONTH OF THE BOMBING"



THE MYSTERY OF HISTORY'S LOST TOMBS

Missing for centuries, where are the final resting places of some of history's greatest figures?

Written by Emily Staniforth



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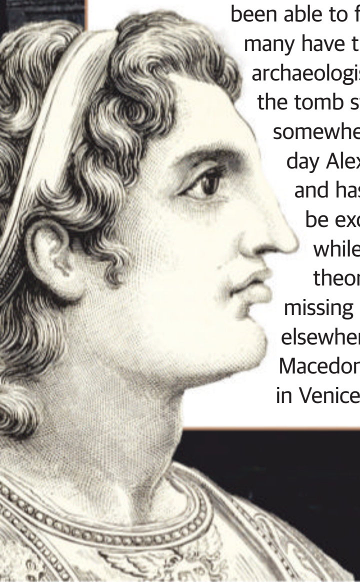
Graves, tombs and burial sites are some of the enduring legacies left behind by the people of the past. They provide a tangible connection to those who came before us, keeping their memory alive. They also provide us with information, presenting clues through which we can understand more about the lives they lived. Tombs of history's famous figures are sites of interest and pilgrimage to many, but there are some people for whom we cannot identify a final resting place. Some of these tombs were lost to time, others were never meant to be found. The mysteries of these lost sites have inspired archaeologists and historians for centuries, with searches happening up to the present day to try and solve them. Here are just a few of history's most intriguing figures whose tombs are still to be found.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

DIED 323 BCE

Described by some as the 'Holy Grail of archaeology', it remains to be seen if anyone can locate the lost tomb of Alexander the Great, King of Macedon. Following the death of Alexander at just 32, his body was sent back to Macedon but it never arrived. Hijacked by one of his generals, Ptolemy, Alexander's corpse was instead sent to Egypt, where it was later interred in a tomb called the Soma in Alexandria.

There are many historical records of Alexander's tomb, with reports of Roman emperors such as Caesar, Augustus and Caligula all visiting the mausoleum in Alexandria. However, in a strange and confounding turn of events, the tomb disappeared from records in the late 4th century CE, vanishing into thin air. Since then, nobody has been able to find it, though many have tried. Some archaeologists believe the tomb still lies somewhere in present-day Alexandria and has yet to be excavated, while other theories place the missing mausoleum elsewhere in Egypt, in Macedonia and even in Venice, Italy.

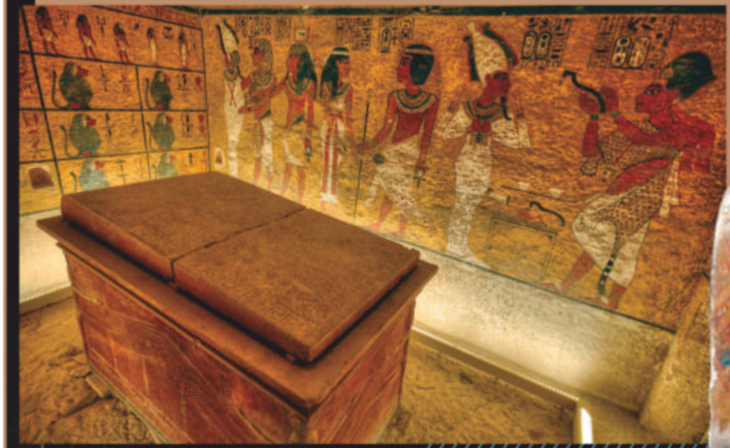


NEFERTITI

DIED 1330 BCE

The tombs of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs have informed much of what we know about their lives and reigns. But for Nefertiti, the famous co-ruler of Egypt from the mid 1300s BCE, historians have had to rely on limited written records and the iconic bust, discovered in 1912, that catapulted her into public consciousness. The location of her burial place remains a mystery, with archaeologists working to uncover her tomb.

There have been several misidentifications of mummies in recent years, with several archaeologists claiming to have found her. However, there is still no confirmed burial site for the Egyptian ruler who suddenly and mysteriously disappeared from Egyptian records after her husband's 12th year on the throne. Theories suggest that Nefertiti may be one of several unidentified mummies already discovered at Amarna and the Valley of the Kings, but there has been no decisive discovery. One suggestion that has gained traction over the years is that the key to finding Nefertiti's tomb lies in the famous tomb of Tutankhamun. Since 2015 a number of surveys have suggested that a hidden chamber exists behind the walls of King Tut's tomb, within which Nefertiti may lie. Work continues on this theory, but if it is correct we might expect a significant archaeological discovery soon.

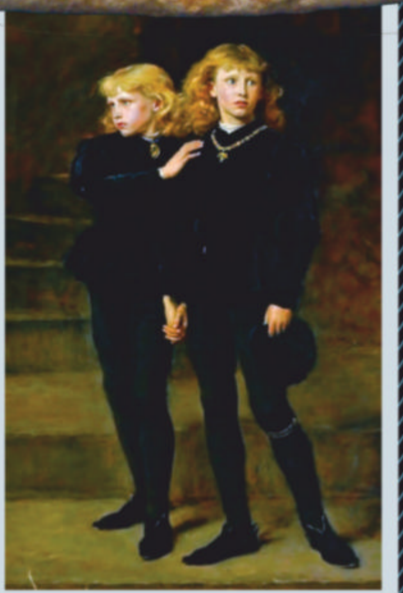


THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER

DISAPPEARED 1483

Over 500 years ago, 13-year-old English King Edward V and his younger brother Richard, Duke of York, disappeared from the Tower of London, never to be seen again. Many believe that they were murdered on the orders of their uncle and Lord Protector Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who had claimed the throne as Richard III. But there is an abundance of other theories that purport that the princes were murdered by a different suspect, or that they escaped.

Historians and archaeologists have tried to find where the bodies of the princes may have been disposed of. However, a historical discovery may provide the answer. In 1674, during the reign of Charles II, two skeletons were uncovered buried in the Tower, allegedly under a staircase in the White Tower. These remains were quickly identified as the missing princes, and were then interred in a funerary urn in Westminster Abbey. However, it still remains to be proven that the bones really do belong to the princes, and many other theories continue to be researched.



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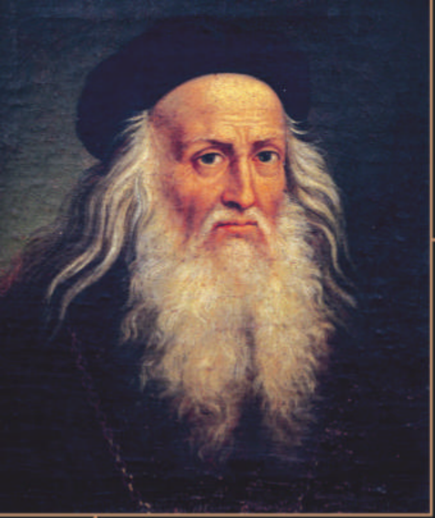


LEONARDO DA VINCI

LEONARDO DA VINCI

DIED 1519

The tomb of Renaissance polymath and all-round genius Leonardo da Vinci is located in France, in a small chapel in the grounds of Château d'Amboise. Simple, right? Wrong! While his grave is clearly marked, experts cannot be sure that da Vinci is buried in it.

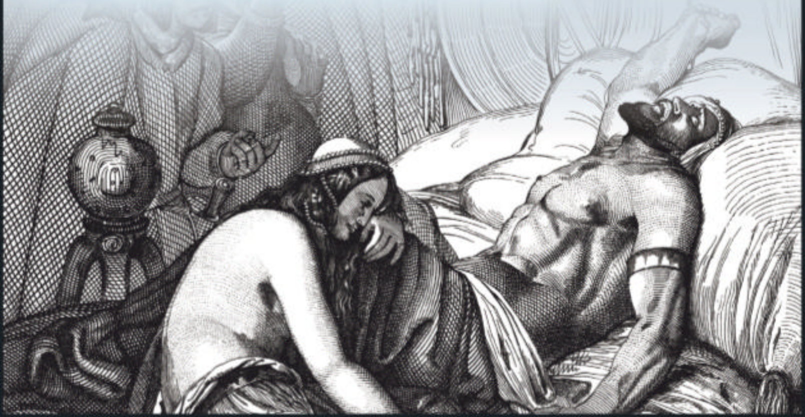
After spending most of his life living and working in the Italian states of Florence and Milan, the inventor and painter moved to France in 1515 upon the invitation of King Francis I. Living in a residence near the royal Château d'Amboise, da Vinci spent his final years studying and teaching as a guest of the French monarchy. Upon his death in 1519, he was buried in the local church of Saint Florentin, located within the grounds of the château. However, the church fell into disrepair following the French Revolution (1789-99) and da Vinci's grave was lost. In 1863, excavations at the former church uncovered a number of bones, some of which art expert Arsene Houssaye identified as da Vinci's remains due to the fragments of tombstone and artefacts from the time of Francis I. The skeletal remains were interred in a new tomb in the château's Saint Hubert Chapel in 1871, which can be visited today. But there is still no confirmation that the bones definitely belong to da Vinci.

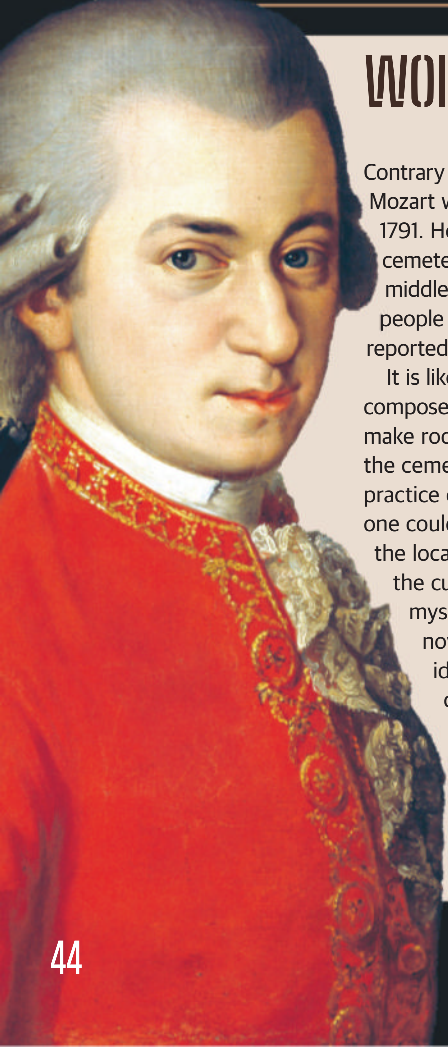
ATTILA THE HUN

DIED 453 CE

Attila, the fearsome leader of the Huns from 434 to 453 CE, was called the 'scourge of God' by his enemies and was notorious among the inhabitants of Europe referred to as 'barbarians' by the Romans. In 453 CE, Attila's reign of terror came to an abrupt end on his wedding night. After marrying his German bride, the following morning he was discovered dead in his bed, with his face covered in blood. It is believed that having drunk a lot during the celebrations he had a severe nosebleed in his sleep that resulted in blood running down his throat and choking him. There were, however, rumours that his new wife had murdered him, though this was never proven.

Following his death, Attila was allegedly buried in a magnificent gold, silver and iron coffin after a grand funeral. The location of his tomb was guarded with utmost secrecy to prevent his enemies from disturbing it or raiding the treasures kept within. There are many theories about where the tomb may be, if it is still in existence, with scholars suggesting it may lie somewhere on the Great Hungarian Plain where Attila's empire was based.





WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

DIED 1791

Contrary to popular belief, musical genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was not buried in a pauper's grave upon his death in 1791. He was actually buried in an unmarked grave in Saint Marx cemetery in Vienna. This was not uncommon for people from middle class families at the time, and it was also usual to bury people of this social standing in graves of multiple people. It was reported that Mozart shared a grave with four or five others.

It is likely that in the years following his burial, the Austrian composer's bones were exhumed and reinterred elsewhere to make room for more burials in the cemetery – another common practice of the time. So while no one could be 100 percent sure of the location of his initial grave, the current site is even more mysterious. A headstone now stands on the site identified in the 19th century as the most likely place of Mozart's burial in Saint Marx, but whether he is still buried there, if he ever was, is unlikely.

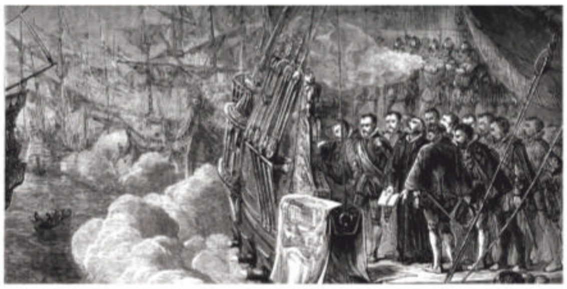
W.A.
MOZART
1756-1791

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

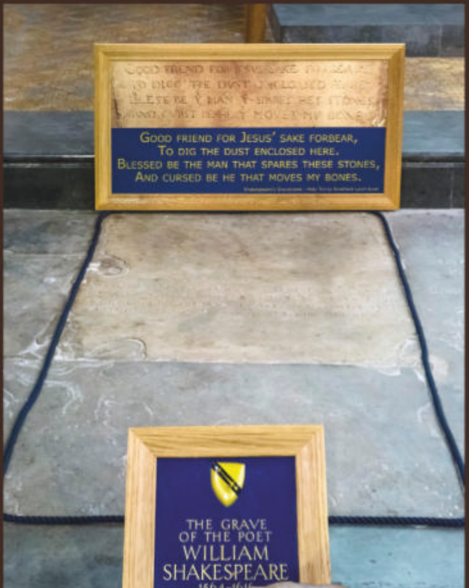
DIED 1596

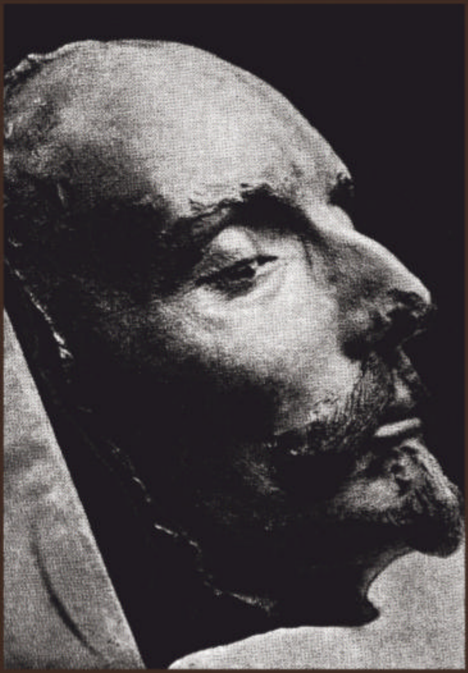
Sailor, explorer and privateer Sir Francis Drake was famous for being the first Englishman to sail around the world and was credited with helping defeat the Spanish Armada of 1588. In 1596, Drake died of dysentery weeks after surviving an armed encounter with Spanish forces in Panama.

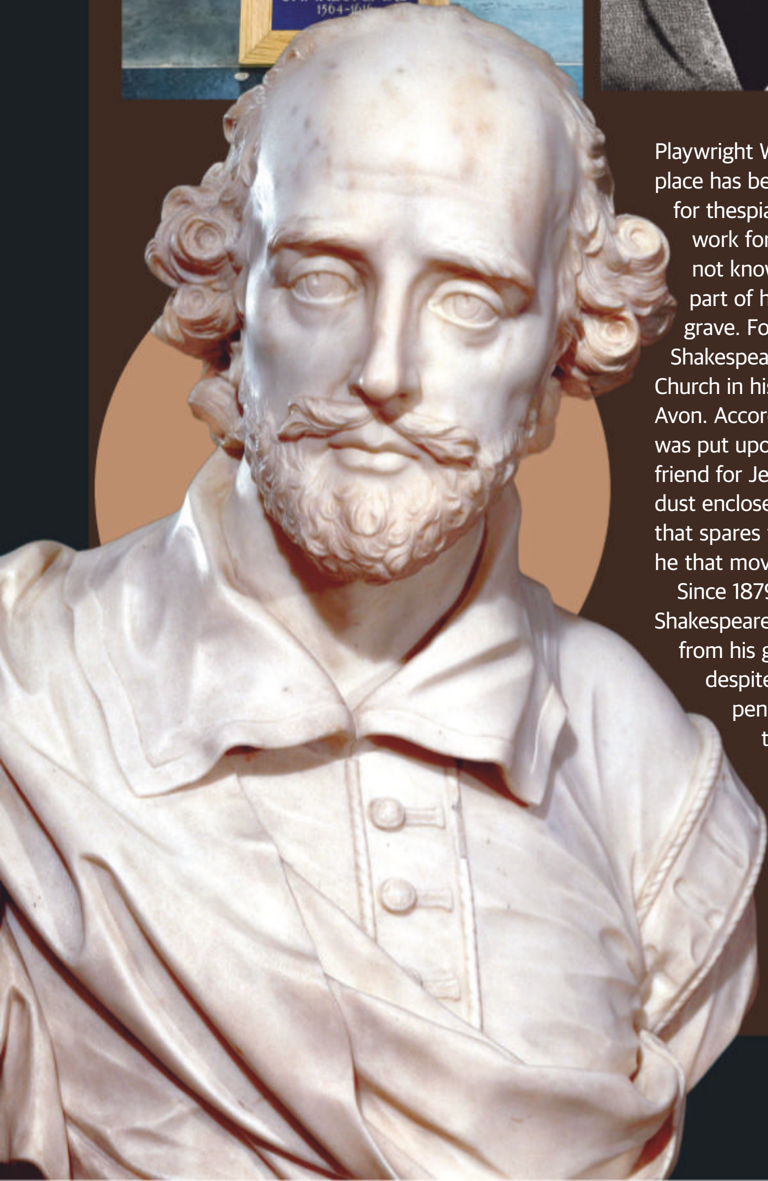
Following his death, Drake's body was dressed in full armour, according to his deathbed request, and placed into a lead coffin. The coffin was then buried at sea off the coast of Portobelo, Panama, where it is presumed to still lie at the bottom of the ocean. There have been several attempts to locate the watery grave but, as yet, none have been successful. However, the location of two scuttled ships from Drake's fleet in Portobelo Bay may provide clues as to his final resting place.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S HEAD DIED 1616


Good friend for Jesus' sake forbear,
To dig the dust enclosed here.
Blessed be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves my bones.
THE GRAVE OF THE POET WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE





Playwright William Shakespeare's resting place has become a site of pilgrimage for thespians and admirers of his work for centuries, but many do not know that there is a significant part of his remains missing from his grave. Following his death in 1616, Shakespeare was buried at Holy Trinity Church in his hometown of Stratford-upon-Avon. According to his instructions, a curse was put upon his tomb which reads: "Good friend for Jesus sake forbeare, to dig the dust enclosed here. Blessed be the man that spares these stones, and cursed be he that moves my bones."

Since 1879, there have been claims that Shakespeare's skull had been removed from his grave by trophy hunters, despite the curse. In 2016, a ground-penetrating radar was used to scan the grave, which confirmed that the top of the site had been disturbed and that the Bard's head was missing. Research continues to find out what happened to the tomb and where Shakespeare's skull may be now.

FINDING CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

How DNA was used to solve a centuries-old mystery

Since 1899, the Seville Cathedral in Spain has been home to a huge tomb that allegedly contains the bones of explorer Christopher Columbus. However, the remains of Columbus, who died in 1506 in Vallodolid, Spain, were moved a number of times after his demise, leading to great confusion about where he was finally laid to rest. From Valladolid his body was first moved to Seville before later being transferred to a church in the Dominican Republic. He remained there until 1795, when he was transferred to Havana in Cuba before being moved for a final time back to Seville the following century.

However, there are some discrepancies in records that call into question the accuracy of all this information. And to confuse things even more, in the 19th century a box of remains was found in the Dominican Republic church, inscribed with Columbus' name. So where is he?

In 2024, researchers at the University of Granada compared the DNA of the exhumed remains from the tomb of Columbus in Seville with that of other members of Columbus' family who are also buried in the cathedral. The scientific tests concluded that the remains interred in Seville's cathedral were, in fact, those of the explorer, finally providing an answer to the mystery.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

RECENT TOMB DISCOVERIES

The archaeological finds that made headlines

THUTMOSE II

In 2022, archeologists discovered a royal tomb in an area called Wadi Gabbanat El Qurud near Luxor in Egypt. It was then confirmed that the tomb belonged to Thutmose II, the ruler of Egypt in the 18th Dynasty and husband of Hatshepsut, though his mummy was not contained within. It was the first Egyptian royal tomb discovered since Tutankhamun's exactly a century before, and the last missing tomb of the 18th Dynasty pharaohs.

RICHARD III

The discovery of the skeleton of English King Richard III hit headlines in 2013 when it was announced that the Plantagenet ruler's remains had been found underneath a car park in Leicester. Researchers had pinpointed the modern car park as the site of a former friary where the king may have been buried following his death at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. It took just five months for researchers to conclude with 99.999% certainty that the skeleton belonged to the lost king.

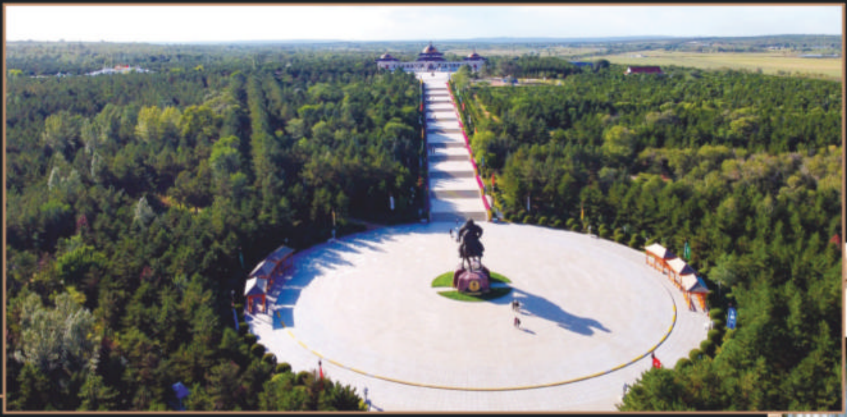
CAPTAIN MATTHEW FLINDERS

While working on a new highspeed rail network (HS2) project in London in 2019, archaeologists uncovered the lost grave of Captain Matthew Flinders, a Royal Navy officer who died in 1814. Flinders was known for his circumnavigation of Australia and allegedly gave the country its name. He had been interred in a burial ground in London, which had later been disturbed and built upon. Flinders was reburied in 2024 in his hometown of Donington, Lincolnshire.

GENGHIS KHAN DIED 1227

While some tombs are simply lost to time, others were never intended to be found, as is the case with Genghis Khan, the founder of the Mongol Empire. He spent his rule conquering and invading to create one of the largest empires in world history, but when he died in 1227 he did not want to be buried in an elaborate mausoleum. Legend has it that Genghis Khan requested he be buried secretly, so his soldiers interred him in an unknown location. To ensure the secret, they killed anyone they saw on the journey to the grave and had their horses walk over the burial spot to disguise any traces of it.

While archaeologists and historians are determined to locate the fearsome warlord's gravesite, many Mongolians would prefer it to remain hidden in respect of their national hero's request. One of the theories that has gained traction is that the grave is situated somewhere on the sacred mountain of Burkhan Khaldun in Mongolia's Khentii province. However, the area today is a protected wildlife zone so no expeditions are likely to be permitted. To honour Genghis Khan, in the 1950s a large mausoleum was built in Inner Mongolia.

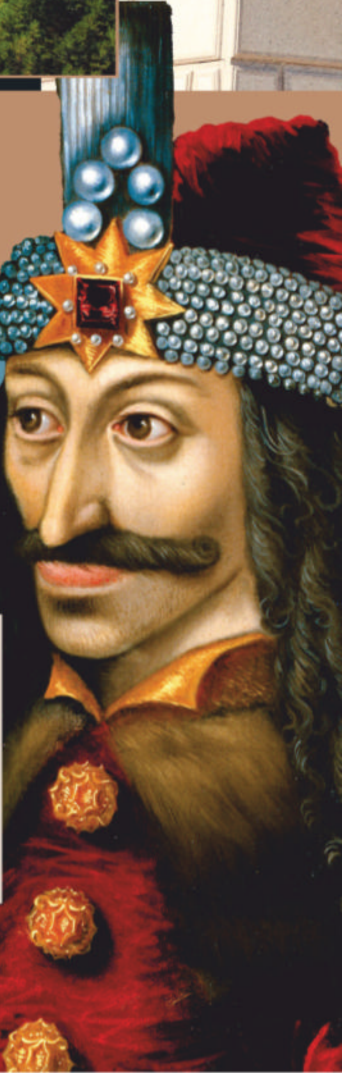


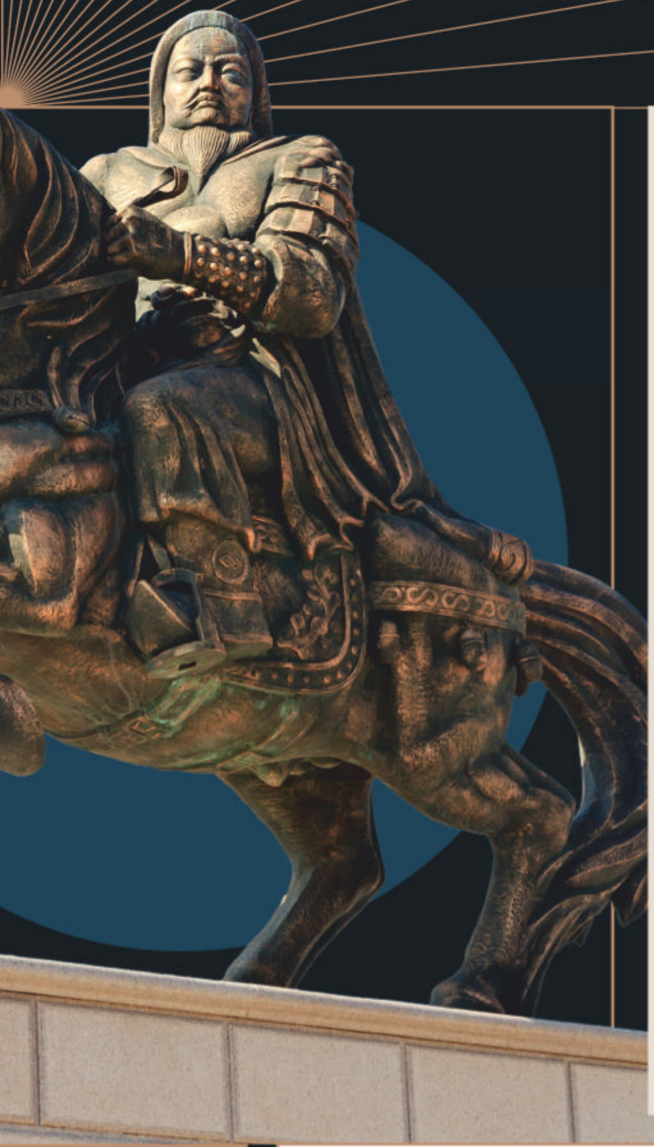
VLAD THE IMPALER

DIED 1477

Vlad III, the Prince of Wallachia (now part of modern Romania) and inspiration for Bram Stoker's Dracula, was infamous for his cruelty and is more commonly known as Vlad the Impaler. He died while fighting the Ottomans in around 1477 and was allegedly beheaded, though details surrounding his death are murky. It was believed that his head was taken by the Ottomans, but that his body was buried in Snagov Monastery in Romania, where a tombstone still lies in the church today. However, an excavation of the tomb did not uncover any human remains and so this is unlikely to be Vlad's final resting place.

There have been some suggestions that the tomb may lie in another of Romania's monasteries, but an even more surprising theory suggests that Vlad's tomb may in fact be in a church in Naples, Italy. Researchers claim that Vlad's remains may have been sent to one of his daughters, who was living in Naples at the time of his death, and that a tomb decorated with dragons in the Santa Maria La Nova church could be his.



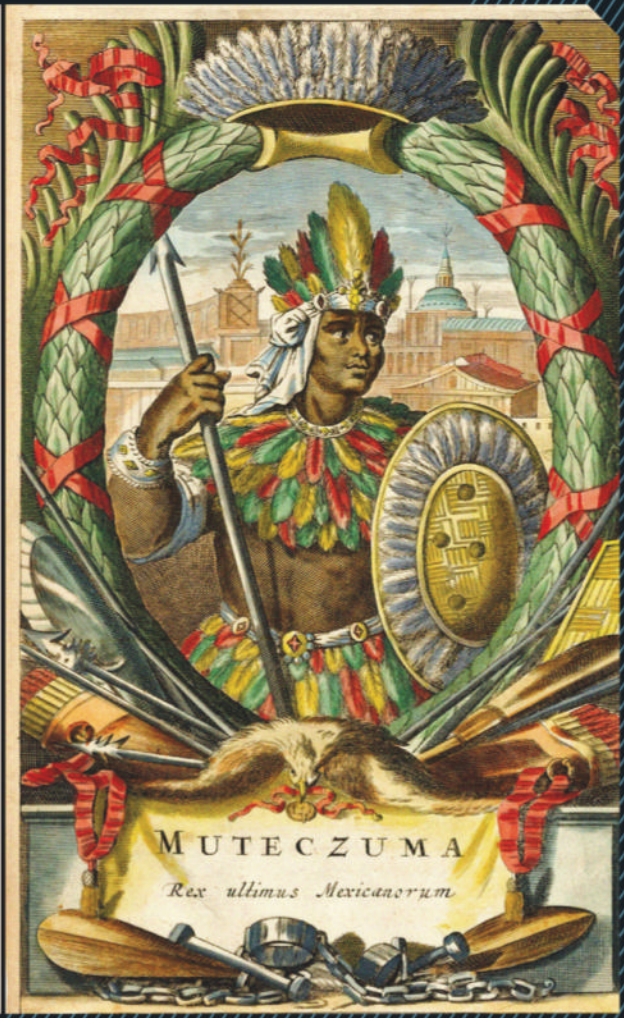


MOCTEZUMA II

DIED 1520

In 1520, Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II was taken hostage by Spanish conquistadors who had been ransacking the city of Tenochtitlan for treasure. As the Aztecs fought back against the Spaniards, Moctezuma was forced onto the balcony of the palace he was being held in to try and calm his people. It is unclear whether Moctezuma was killed by his own people as they hurled rocks at the palace or if he was murdered by the conquistadors, but he did not emerge from the incident alive.

Following his chaotic demise, it is not known what happened to the body of the Aztec's most famous leader. There are some suggestions that he may have been cremated but, to date, there has been no evidence found of a tomb of any kind. However, there have never been any discoveries of imperial Aztec burial sites, and so Moctezuma II is just one of many emperors that have never been located.

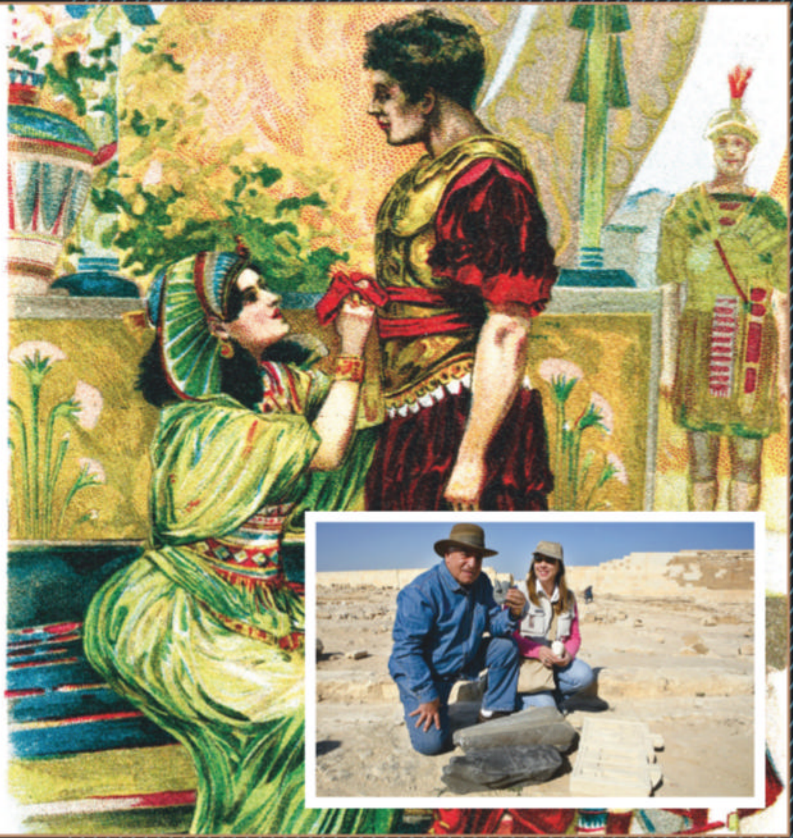


ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

DIED 30 BCE

After Egyptian Queen Cleopatra and her Roman husband Mark Antony were defeated by Octavian's forces and took their own lives, the emperor decided to allow the lovers to be buried together. But in a mystery that continues to intrigue archaeologists, their tomb has never been identified.

Egyptologist and former Minister of State for Antiquities Affairs of Egypt Zahi Hawass and Dominican archaeologist Kathleen Martinez have spent many years trying to locate the tomb, and both believed it may lie under a temple in Taposiris Magna to the west of Alexandria. But recently, Hawass dismissed this theory and instead claimed it was likely the tomb lies in the sea off Alexandria. Some of the royal city and its buildings were submerged after an earthquake and tsunami in 365 CE so this explanation is plausible. However, Martinez continues to search for the couple in Taposiris Magna and in 2022 located a tunnel under a temple which she believes may lead to the lost tomb.



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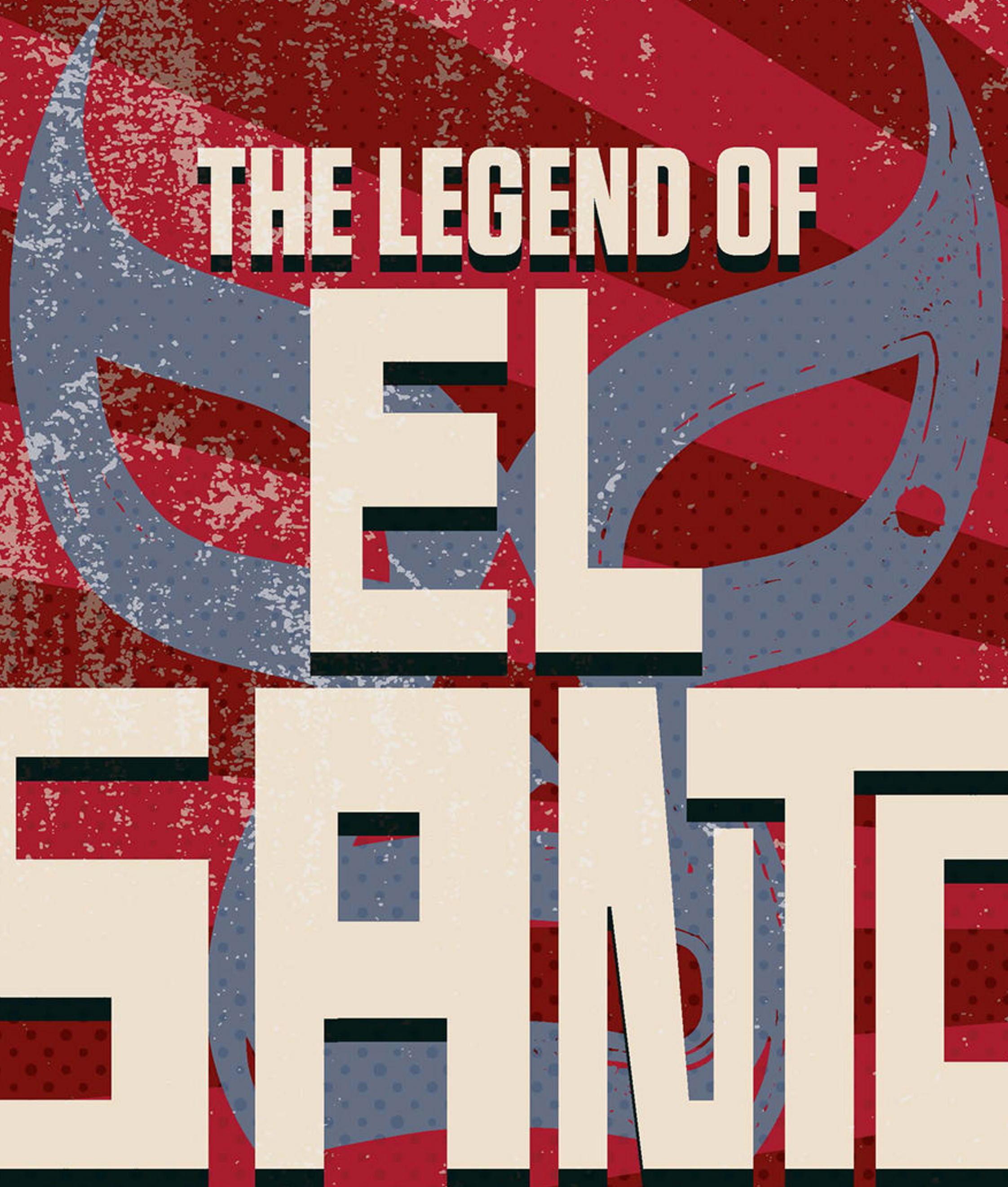
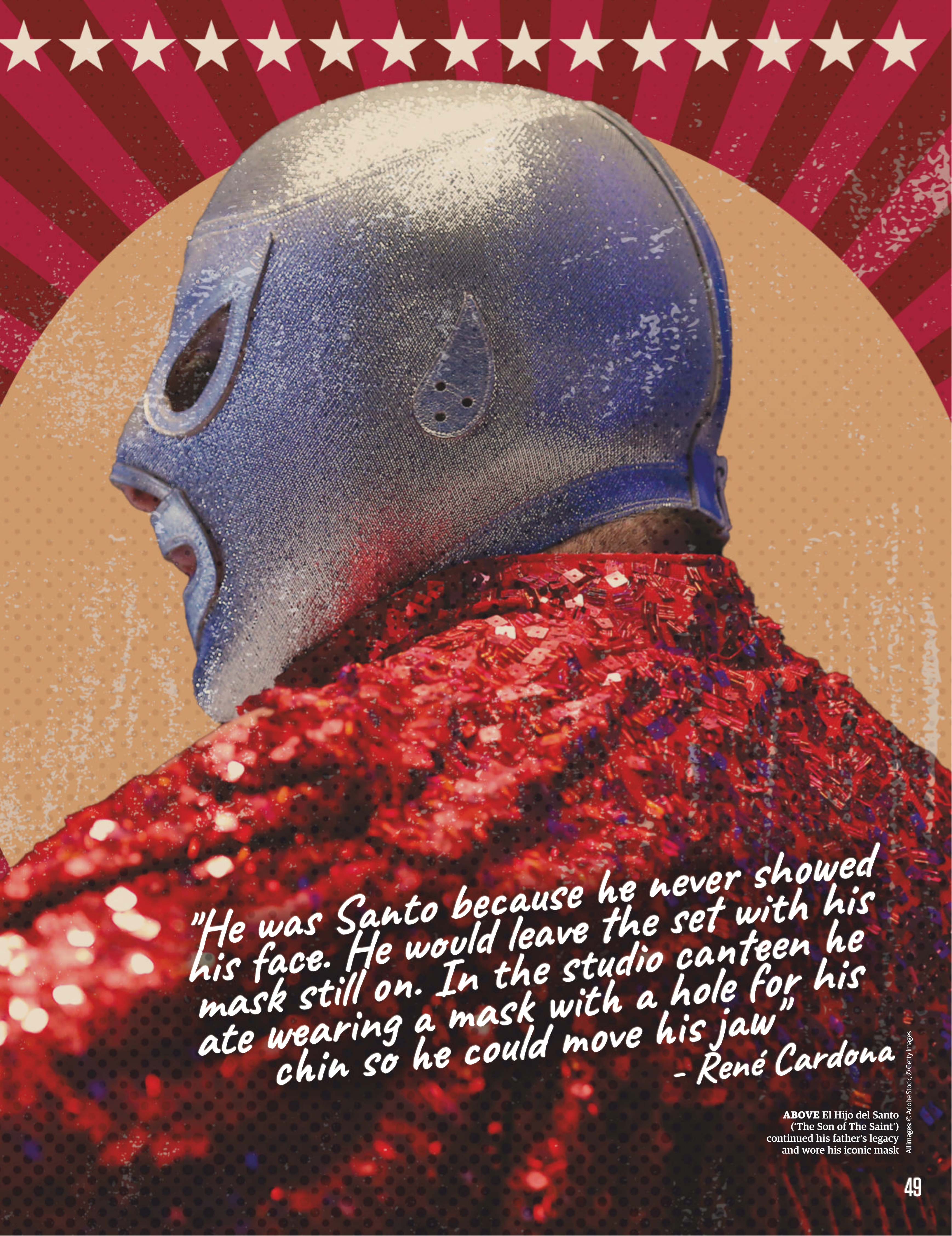


THE LEGEND OF EL SANTO

THIS MASKED MEXICAN WRESTLER AND NATIONAL HERO LEAPT FROM THE RING ONTO THE BIG SCREEN. BUT WHO WAS HE?

Written by Callum McKelvie

In our modern world, folk heroes seem few and far between. Of course, there are fictional examples. In the early 1960s suave superspy James Bond embodied a post-war British fantasy, while in America superheroes such as Spider-Man personified the American spirit. But James Bond was an actor called Sean Connery and Spider-Man merely lines and ink. However, in Mexico one man came to unite the people, standing for justice both in and out of the ring: El Santo, or The Man in the Silver Mask. One of the icons of lucha libre – Mexican wrestling – El Santo was not only a master of his profession but also featured in comic books, numerous pieces of merchandise and over 50 feature films. His movies saw him face supernatural foes such as werewolves, vampires and even La Llorna – the terrifying crying woman of Mexican folklore. Not until his retirement did he publicly remove his mask and the lines between the real-life Santo and his fictional counterpart became increasingly blurred.



"He was Santo because he never showed his face. He would leave the set with his mask still on. In the studio canteen he ate wearing a mask with a hole for his chin so he could move his jaw"

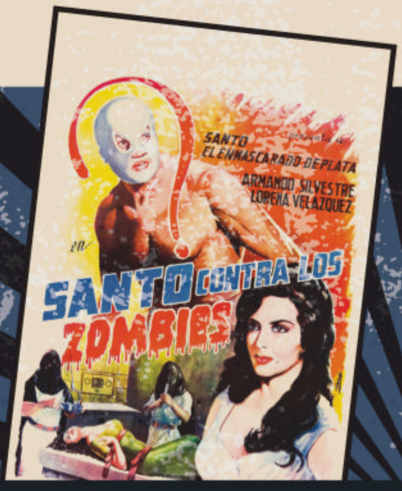
- René Cardona

ABOVE El Hijo del Santo ('The Son of The Saint') continued his father's legacy and wore his iconic mask

All images: © Adobe Stock, © Getty Images

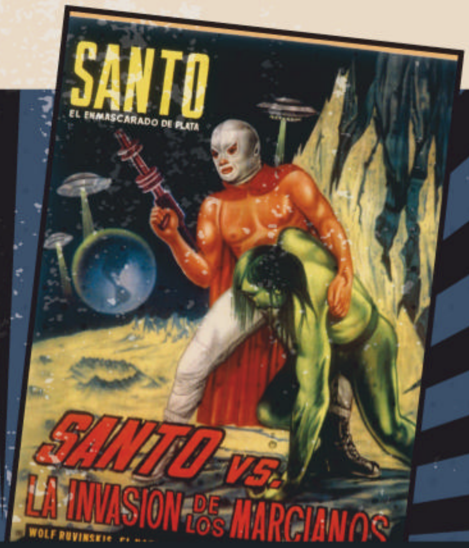
SANTO ON THE BIG SCREEN

The masked luchador starred in over 50 films – here are six of his most eccentric and fantastical adventures



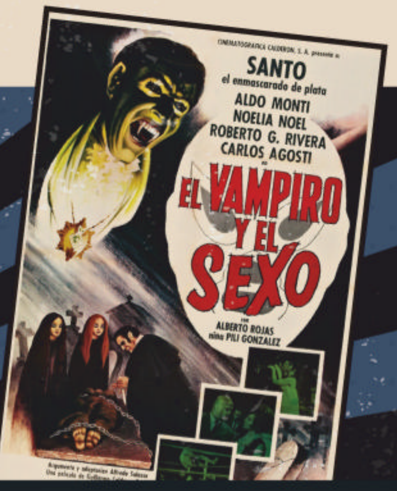
1961 **SANTO VS THE ZOMBIES**

A film of many firsts, this movie sees Santo no longer sharing top billing but taking centre stage himself. Rather than a straight crime caper with a plot ripped from the pages of pulp magazines, elements of horror are incorporated as Mexico's own brand of gothic horror films, such as 1957's *El Vampiro* and 1961's *The Curse of the Crying Woman*, were popular at the time. It was also the first of several to receive US distribution.



1967 **SANTO VS THE MARTIAN INVASION**

As well as starring in action, crime and horror films, Santo occasionally dipped his toes into science fiction cinema too. This time the masked wrestler has to stop an attempted invasion from a group of scantily clad Martian men and women. The highlight of the film is the obligatory musical number, performed by the titular martian invaders.



1969 **SANTO AND DRACULA'S TREASURE**

Santo invents a time machine and embarks on a hunt for Count Dracula's treasure. Notoriously, an alternate version was filmed called *El Vampiro Y El Sexo* aimed at adult audiences, with scenes featuring additional nudity. When this version was rediscovered in 2011, his son El Hijo Del Santo fought to prevent its release, fearing it would damage his father's reputation, but the movie was eventually released that same year.

LUCHA LIBRE: THE HISTORY OF MASKED MEXICAN WRESTLING

The story of Mexico's love affair with masked wrestling begins with a man known as Salvador Lutteroth. In the late 19th century figures such as Enrique Ugartechea had helped pioneer lucha libre by hosting contests, based on the ancient Greco-Roman techniques, during the French Emperor Napoleon III's occupation of Mexico (1863-67). But it is Lutteroth who has to be considered the true 'father of lucha libre'. In 1933 Lutteroth and his business partner Francisco Ahumada brought a number of Texan wrestlers across the border for a series of matches in Mexico City. These displays were so popular that Lutteroth held further contests with wrestlers from Poland, Italy and Germany.

As the audiences for these events grew, several Mexican wrestling stars began to emerge. One of the first luchador enmascarado (masked wrestlers) was Jesús Velázquez Quintero, who debuted in 1936. In her book *The World of Lucha Libre*, Heather Levi describes how Velázquez wore a mask and cape and carried a huge sack from which he released "a swirl of bats into the audience."

LEFT Mas wrestling hugely pop sport in Me

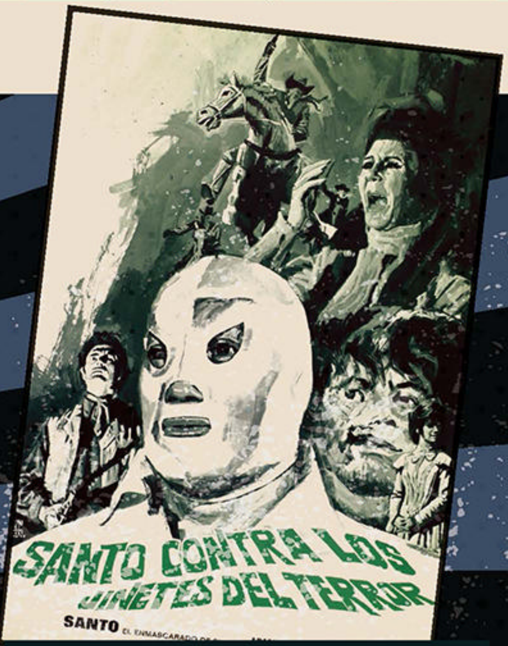
Although not all luchadors wear masks, they quickly became central to lucha libre's growing mythology, largely thanks to El Santo. The masks are rarely removed in public, with the wearer's true identity remaining secret. If a masked luchador were to lose a 'lucha de apuetos' (meaning 'gambling' or 'betting match'), then he would be forced to unmask himself.

Alongside the concept of the mask, another key element of lucha libre (as with other wrestling forms) is that each luchador occupies a specific role, either hero or villain. The former, known as técnicos, practise a fighting style based on rigorously practised technique, hence their name. The villains, known as rudos, are less-disciplined and prepared to fight dirty in order to win. Interestingly, it was as a rudo that Mexico's greatest wrestling hero began his career, only later establishing himself as a técnico.

ENTER EL SANTO

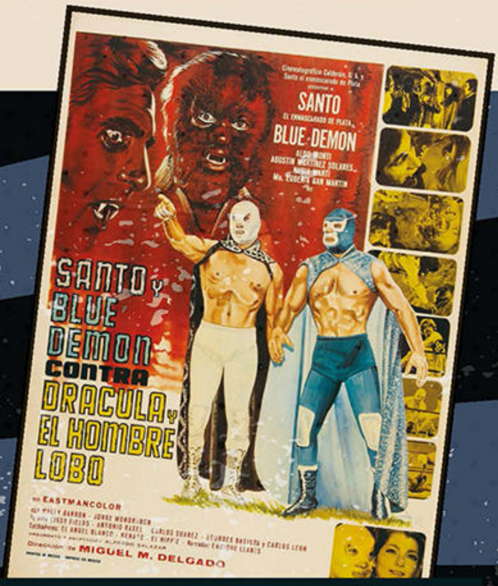
Born Rodolfo Guzman Huerta on 23 September 1917, El Santo was just 16 when he first entered the ring. It was not until 1942, nearly ten years into his career, that he took the name of El Santo and adopted the famous silver mask. One story has it that his alter ego was born after his manager offered him a choice of three: El Diablo, El Angel or El Santo. In Spanish, El Santo means 'The Saint', and the choice may have been inspired by author Leslie Charteris' popular pulp hero of the same name. But the name was one that El Santo took seriously. Throughout his career he devoted much of his time to charity work, in particular helping those living in poverty.

Despite his origins as a rudo, something about El Santo struck a chord with the crowds. Key to his legend was the mask that he wore, and El Santo took great steps to hide his identity, rarely removing the disguise. In an interview with British TV


SANTO CONTRA LOS JINETES DEL TERROR
SANTO

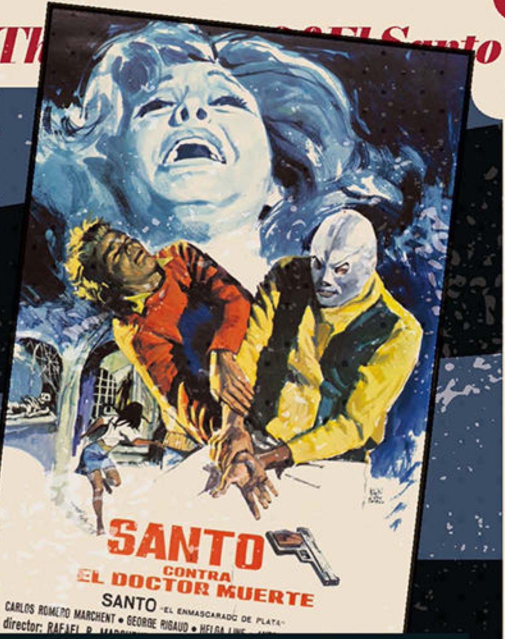
1970 SANTO VS THE RIDERS OF TERROR

Once again demonstrating El Santo's cinematic versatility, *Santo vs the Riders of Terror* sees The Man in The Silver Mask star in a western. It depicts a town terrorised by evil bandits, who use a group of escaped lepers in their evil schemes. As with *Santo and Dracula's Treasure*, this movie also had an 'adult' edition, titled *Los Leprosos Y El Sexo – 'Lepers and Sex.'*


SANTO
BLUE DEMON
SANTO y BLUE DEMON CONTRA DRACULA y EL HOMBRE LOBO
EASTMANCOLOR
MIGUEL M. DELGADO

1973 SANTO AND BLUE DEMON VS DRACULA AND THE WEREWOLF

By the early 1970s 'team-up' movies were commonplace, with El Santo frequently paired with wrestling rival Blue Demon. Aldo Monti, who had previously played the evil ruler of the vampires in *Santo and Dracula's Treasure*, returns this time with a werewolf, and later a whole pack of them for good measure. Previously El Santo and Blue Demon had fought a whole host of screen nasties in *Santo and Blue Demon vs The Monsters* (1970).


SANTO CONTRA EL DOCTOR MUERTE
SANTO "EL ENMASCARADO DE PLATA"
CARLOS ROMERO MARCHENT • GEORGE RIGAUD • HELGA LINE
director: RAFAEL

1973 SANTO VS DR DEATH

El Santo purportedly considered this film to be one of his best. It sees The Man in the Silver Mask sent to Madrid to put a stop to a gang of art forgers. The leader of the group is the maniacal Dr Mann (George Rigaud), whose complex scheme is connected to his diabolical experiments. *Santo vs Dr Death* was a co-production with Spain and benefited from the Spanish locations.

> "Although not all luchadors wear masks, they quickly became central to lucha libre's growing mythology – largely thanks to El Santo"

presenter Jonathan Ross for 1989's *The Incredibly Strange Film Show*, Mando Guerrero – the son of Gory Guerroro, El Santo's tag wrestling partner – claimed that wearing the mask so often permanently altered El Santo's features, pinning his ears back. "I remember his face very little, I remember the mask a lot," Guerrero goes on to say, stating that the mask represented "the identity of it all. The secret of finding out who it is."

LEFT Some of the most popular luchadors became comic book superheroes, including El Santo and the Blue Demon

SANTO VS BLUE DEMON

El Santo's most famous rivalry was with Demonio Azul, the Blue Demon. Born Alejandro Muñoz Moreno in 1922, he was trained by the legendary Rolando Vera and quickly became a talented luchador. Moreno first appeared as the masked Blue Demon in 1948 and, much like El Santo, began his career as a rudo before later switching to become a técnico. The Blue Demon's change of heart occurred as part of a long-running and highly publicised feud with The Man in the Silver Mask, the catalyst of which was a match that has gone down in lucha libre history.

During the early 1950s the Blue Demon formed a tag-team with another wrestler known as The Black Shadow. On 7 November 1952, The Black Shadow faced El Santo in a lucha de apuetos. The Black Shadow thought he had little to worry about because he had defeated his opponent five years earlier, but to the shock of many this time it was The Man in the Silver Mask who was victorious.

Blue Demon, horrified at El Santo's victory, now became a técnico. For almost a full year the rivalry between the two grew, until August 1953 when Blue Demon finally achieved the vengeance he sought and defeated El Santo. However, for the rest of their careers, and even after El Santo's passing, an air of friendly competitiveness between Mexico's two most famous luchadors remained. Speaking in 1989, Blue Demon said his one-on-one bouts with El Santo were "a chance to demonstrate my superiority," proudly proclaiming, "that I beat him on two separate occasions."

EL SANTO: HERO OF THE MEXICAN PEOPLE

In 1952 the first of four series of El Santo comic books was published. The brainchild of Jose Guadalupe Cruz, they included still photographs combined with original drawings.

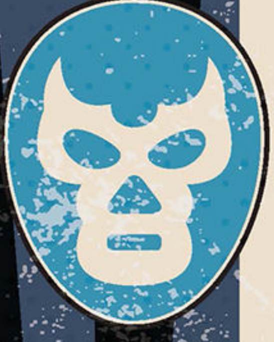
All images: © Adobe Stock, ©Alamy, © Getty Images, © Shutterstock

MASKED LUCHADORS

There have been many who have taken the burden of the mask. Here are four of the most notable

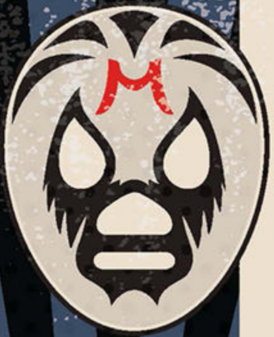
BLUE DEMON 1948-89
RUDO/TÉCNICO

El Santo's most famous rival. Like El Santo, he too became a cinematic icon, beginning with *The Blue Demon* in 1965. Despite being rivals, he and El Santo frequently appeared on screen together. His legacy is continued by his adopted son, Blue Demon Jr.



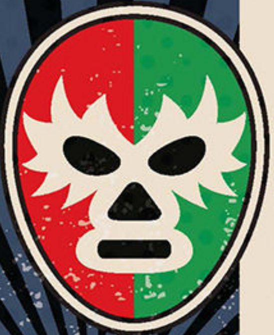
MIL MASCARAS 1965 – PRESENT
TÉCNICO

Unlike other wrestlers, Mil Mascaras was initially created to star in luchador films, before entering the ring. He returned to the screen in 2007's *Mil Mascaras vs The Aztec Mummy*, which received several sequels. Now in his early 80s, Mascaras has only partially retired and still occasionally appears in the wrestling ring.



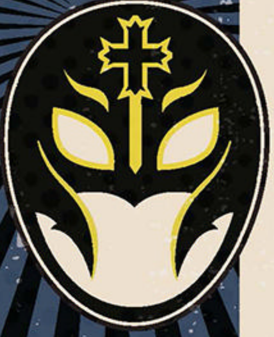
DR WAGNER JR 1986 – PRESENT
TÉCNICO

Following in his father's footsteps, Dr Wagner Jr began life as a rudo but soon became regarded as one of the top técnicos. In 2017 he was defeated by Psycho Clown and, as is the custom, was forced to unmask. However, he chose not to retire but instead performs under the name Rey Wagner.



REY MYSTERIO SR 1976 – 2009
TÉCNICO

Rey Mysterio Sr, as well as competing in many lucha libre events in Mexico, also proved to be incredibly successful on the international stage. His nephew took on the mantle of Rey Mysterio Jr and became even more well known than his uncle. In late December 2024, Mysterio Sr passed away at the age of 66.



L SANTO ABANDONA LA ARENA COLISEO!!
CASI QUINCE AÑOS ENMASCARADO!!
PROYECTO PARA EL FUTURO

ABOVE Artefacts from El Santo's career on display at the Latin American University in Mexico City during a 2009 exhibition

ABOVE-MIDDLE El Santo's films depicted the wrestler as a heroic righter of wrongs

ABOVE-RIGHT His movies spanned many genres, from horror and comedy to action-adventure and sci-fi

With around 300 issues published between 1952 and 1958, these comics were key to El Santo's burgeoning legend, repositioning him as a superhero. He was no longer simply a rough-fighting rudo but, as Evan Lieberman describes in *Masks and Masculinity: Culture, Modernity and Gender Identity in the Lucha Libre Films of El Santo*, the wrestler was now "the hero of the Mexican people, endowed with superior intelligence, morality and almost superhuman powers."

In the early 1960s, El Santo decided to reinvent himself as a técnico. With the comic books still in circulation, film producers soon came calling, keen to exploit the luchador's popularity and the public's image of him. The idea of an El Santo movie had been touted as early as 1952, when legendary director René Cardona produced *The Man in the Silver Mask*. As the name suggests, this was originally designed as a vehicle for El Santo, but he'd dropped out at the last moment and the script was altered so the title could instead refer to the film's villain.

Despite this debacle, enterprising film producers weren't dissuaded and the luchador was cast in pulp adventures *Santo vs The Evil Brain* and *Santo vs Infernal Men*. Produced back-to-back in Cuba in 1958, they featured El Santo as the co-lead, but the luchador was not originally intended to be named in either film's title. Somewhat lacklustre compared to the later movies, they went unreleased for several years, but when his first starring role, in 1962's *Santo vs The Zombies*, proved incredibly popular, producers inserted '*Santo vs*' into the titles of the two earlier films and they were rushed to screens.

EL SANTO: ICON OF THE SCREEN

The tone of his films quickly shifted from pulpy crime romps to encompass horror, science fiction, comedy and even western themes. The heroic El Santo fought seductive bloodsuckers in 1962's *Santo vs The Vampire Women*, aliens in 1967's *Santo vs The Martian Invasion* and a whole collection of monsters, including Frankenstein and an Egyptian mummy, in *Santo and Blue Demon vs The Monsters* (1970).

The luchador even faced figures from Mexican folklore, such as the terrifying spirit La Llorna in 1974's *The Revenge Of The Crying Woman*. But without a doubt the most popular of these films was 1970's *The Mummies of Guanajuato*. This saw El Santo and fellow wrestlers Blue Demon and Mil Mascaras take on the titular mummies, summoned by an evil wrestler called Satan. As this suggests, El Santo was not the

> "El Santo was buried wearing the mask that had concealed his identity for so much of his life"

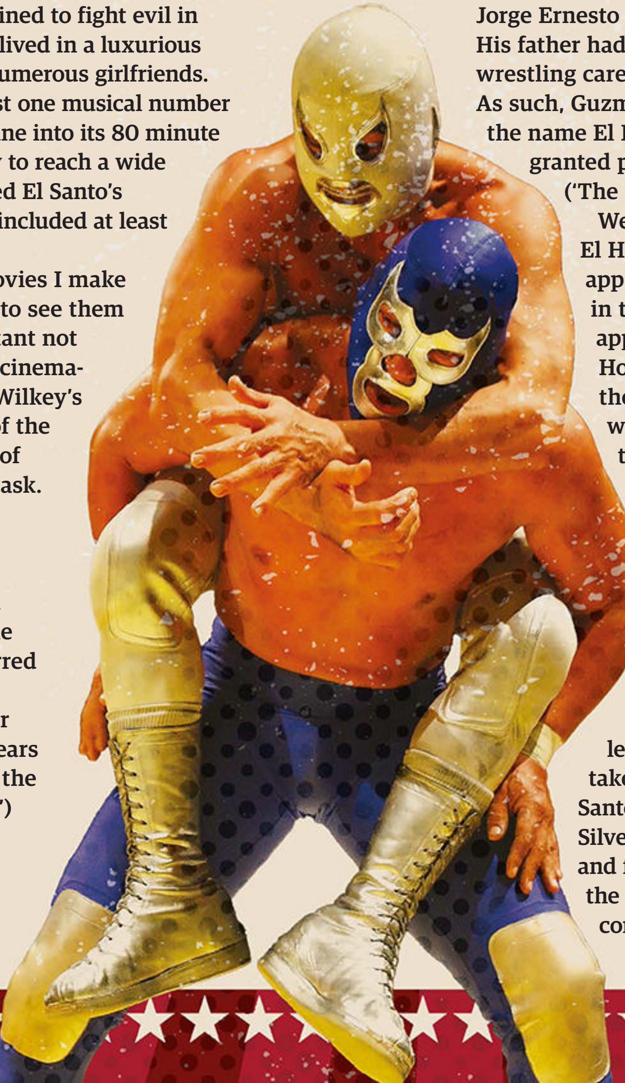
only wrestler to become a movie star and an entire subgenre of luchador films proliferated. The Blue Demon featured in several movies of his own, beginning in 1965, and there were six '*Wrestling Women*' films, including 1964's *Wrestling Women vs The Aztec Mummy*.

The Santo movies helped strengthen the public's image of the luchador as a heroic figure, destined to fight evil in its many forms. The fictional El Santo lived in a luxurious mansion, drove a sports car and had numerous girlfriends. Interestingly, each film features at least one musical number (1963's *Santo vs The Strangler* crams nine into its 80 minute run-time), reflecting the genre's ability to reach a wide audience. But they never overshadowed El Santo's wrestling career and the films always included at least one lucha libre match.

But were they any good? "These movies I make are not art," said El Santo. "People go to see them to have fun." Nevertheless, it's important not to underestimate his popularity with cinema-going audiences: according to James Wilkey's *Truth, Justice and The Mexican Way*, of the roughly 300 such films produced, 50 of them starred The Man in the Silver Mask.

DEATH OF A LEGEND

By the early 1980s El Santo had faced werewolves, stranglers, La Llorna and Dracula, but there was one foe even he could not defeat: time. In 1982 he starred in his final feature film, *The Fury of the Karate Experts,* and that same year chose to retire from wrestling. Two years later, El Santo appeared as a guest on the talk show *Contrapunto* ('*Counterpoint*') and, without any warning, lifted his mask and revealed his identity to the public. The Man in the Silver Mask finally had a face.



BELOW
El Hijo Del Santo and Blue Demon Jr have continued their fathers' rivalry in the ring

On 6 February 1984, just a week after revealing his identity, the legend that was El Santo passed away from a heart attack – he was 66 years old. Over 10,000 people filled the streets for his funeral, among them wrestling rivals Blue Demon and Mil Mascaras. Interred at the Mausoleos del Ángel cemetery in Mexico City, El Santo was buried wearing the mask that had concealed his identity for so much of his life.

THE SON OF EL SANTO

But not even death could stop The Man in the Silver Mask. Shortly after his retirement, the youngest of his ten children, Jorge Ernesto Guzmán Rodríguez, entered the ring himself. His father had purportedly forbidden him from beginning a wrestling career until he had completed his college degree. As such, Guzmán Rodríguez originally performed under the name El Korak (after the son of Tarzan) and was only granted permission to perform as El Hijo Del Santo ('The Son of The Saint') once he had graduated.

Wearing the same mask and cape as his father, El Hijo Del Santo kept alive his legacy. He even appeared in a number of his own films, beginning in the 1980s, but by this time the audience's appetite for these movies had begun to wane. However, in 1993 El Hijo Del Santo returned to the screen in *Santo: The Man in the Silver Mask*, which gave a fictionalised account of how he took on his father's mantle. Since then he has appeared in a number of other feature and short films, including as himself in the 2023 biopic *Cassandro*.

But all good things must come to an end and in April this year El Hijo Del Santo decided it was time that he too retired – after 43 years in the ring he will fight his final matches as part of a farewell tour later this year. Will this be the end of El Santo's legacy? Perhaps not, as now his grandson has taken on the famous silver mask, fighting as El Santo Jr. Eighty-three years after The Man in the Silver Mask became an icon of Mexican culture and folklore, and with a new generation entering the ring, it looks like the legend of El Santo will continue for many years to come.

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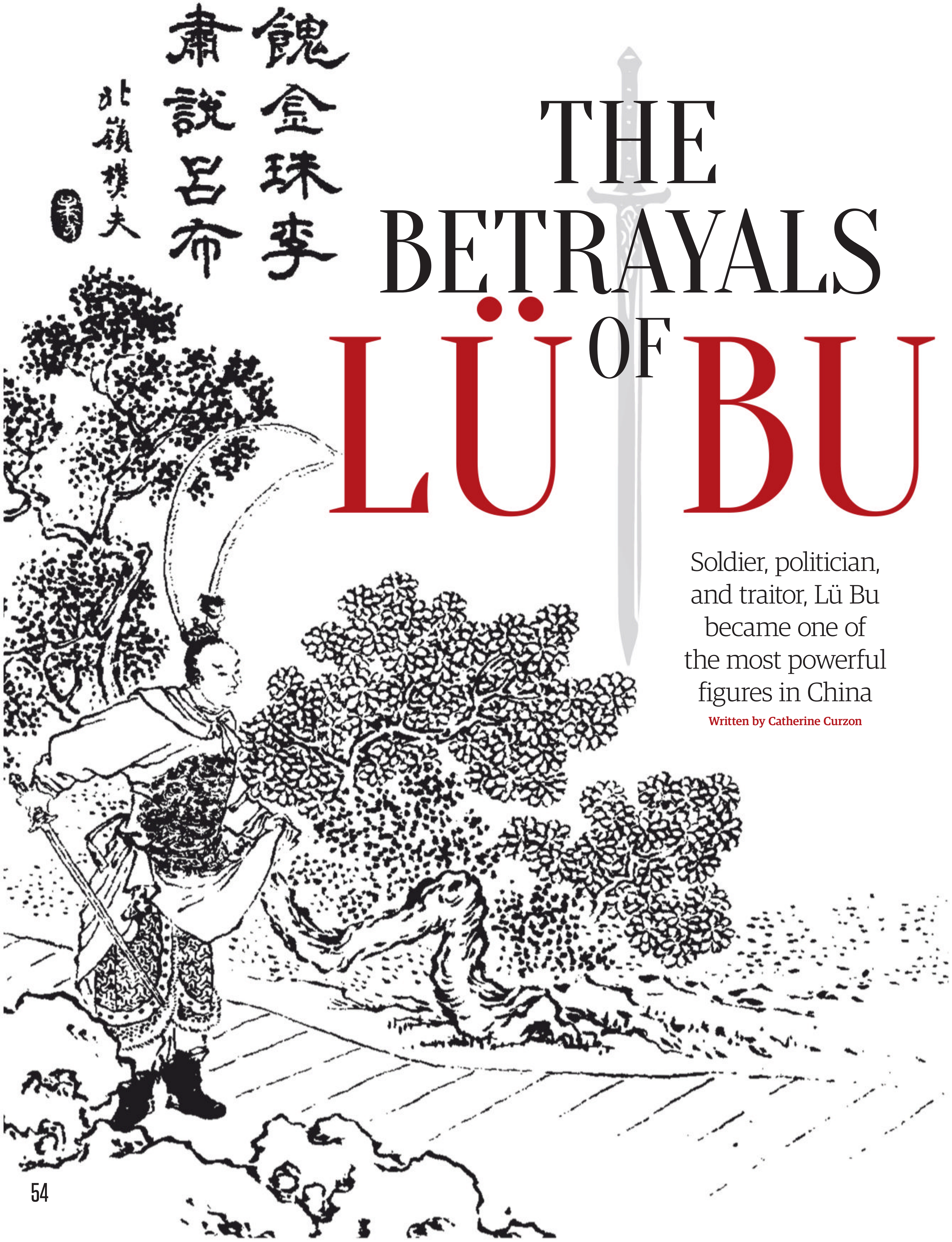
THE BETRAYALS OF LÜ BU

Soldier, politician, and traitor, Lü Bu became one of the most powerful figures in China

Written by Catherine Curzon

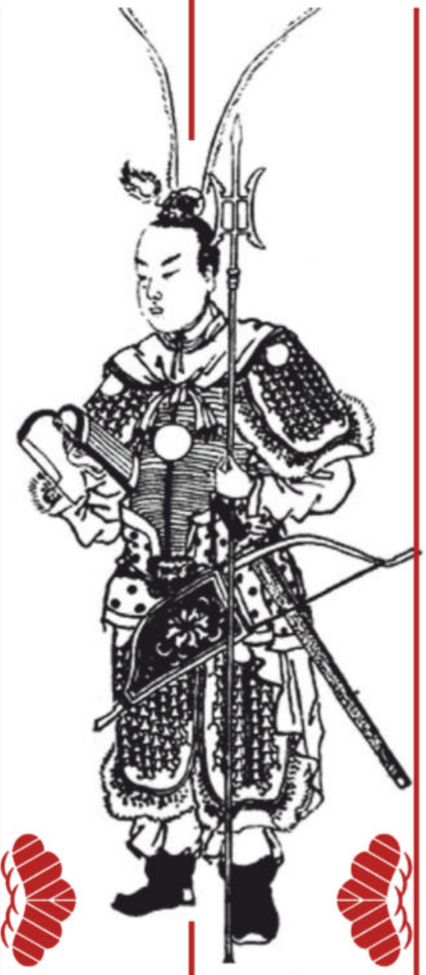

餽金珠李肅說呂布
北嶺樸夫

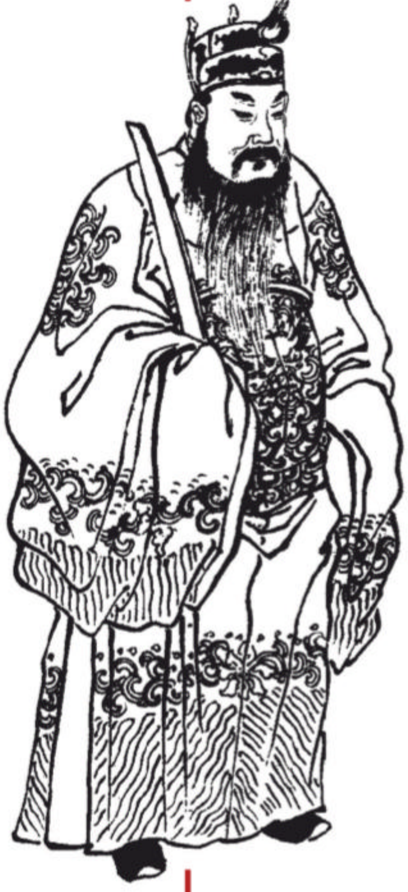
Lü Bu was a general of the ancient Chinese Three Kingdoms era. Massive in stature, a fierce warrior, peerless archer and immensely talented horseman, he was feared and revered in equal measure. His loyalty, however, left much to be desired.

Lü Bu built his reputation under the mentorship of Ding Yuan, the inspector of the Bing province, who employed him as a personal aide and came to view him as a trusted retainer. When Emperor Ling died in 189 CE, Ding Yuan rallied to the call of General He Jin and led his army to the capital, Luoyang, where they intended to eliminate the powerful eunuch faction, a group of highly influential figures at Ling's court. Instead, He Jin was assassinated before Ding Yuan could reach Luoyang. It was then that warlord Dong Zhuo marched into the city, defeated the eunuchs and took control of the capital. When Ding Yuan arrived he found Dong Zhuo in charge but believed that he too could carve out a role. Dong Zhuo, however, had no such plans.

Though Ding Yuan had taken Lü Bu under his wing and given him a position of trust and influence, Dong Zhuo was sure that the ambitious young man could be tempted into betraying his mentor in return for a position with his own, more powerful, faction. He was right. Lü Bu agreed to betray Ding Yuan and murdered his mentor by decapitating him. He presented the severed head to Dong Zhuo, who now held total power in the capital. In return Dong Zhuo named Lü Bu as his foster son, rewarding him for his loyalty with a series of lucrative promotions.

With the government under his control, Dong Zhuo placed a puppet ruler, Emperor Xian, in power, but this proved a step too far for other local warlords. They formed an association with the aim of deposing Dong Zhuo and his puppet monarch, leading to a series of brutal battles in which Lü Bu proved his ferocity. However, while he was a fierce and terrifying warrior, he was also a difficult man to get along with. As a result of personality clashes with his fellow officer, Hu Zhen, their army fell into disarray and handed the coalition of warlords a significant victory, forcing them into retreat. Warlord Sun Jian made it all the way to the capital, all the time driving Lü Bu further back. So close did they come that Dong Zhuo evacuated Luoyang and moved the capital to Chang'an, leaving his troops to raze Luoyang to the ground. It was to be the last battle for the coalition, which broke up following the capital's move.





Rude and boorish, Dong Zhuo was bitterly aware that he had many enemies on his own side. Constantly alert to the threat of assassination, he kept Lü Bu close by as a bodyguard. However, Lü Bu wasn't immune from his foster father's furious and sometimes violent outbursts, which eventually led him to resent Dong Zhuo, though he kept his simmering feelings a secret from his patron. He had also embarked on a secret affair with one of Dong Zhuo's maids and feared what might happen should this forbidden liaison be discovered by Dong Zhuo.

The answer came soon after the discovery of the relationship. After a particularly violent attack, when Dong Zhuo threw an axe at Lü Bu and almost killed him, Lü Bu went to see Wang Yun, an influential politician who had always been an ally, and told him what had happened. Only then did Wang Yun and another official, Shisun Rui, admit that they were plotting a coup against Dong Zhuo and invite Lü Bu to join the conspiracy. At first Lü Bu was horrified at the idea, saying that he could not kill his father, but the two men pointed out that they were father and son in words only, adding that Dong Zhuo seemed to care nothing for the bond when he had almost killed Lü Bu. Lü Bu considered their words and once again decided to place his own interests ahead of loyalty: he would kill Dong Zhuo.

On 22 May 192 CE, Lü Bu greeted Dong Zhuo at the palace gate. Ranked along the wall were a dozen trusted soldiers under the command of the supposedly loyal Captain Li Su. It was Li Su who dealt the first blow, swinging at Dong Zhuo with a ji, a type of polearm, but the weapon glanced off the warlord's armour. When Dong Zhuo appealed to his bodyguard Lü Bu to save him, Lü Bu told him he was

▶

ABOVE Cao Cao had Lü Bu executed in 199 CE rather than accept an alliance that he couldn't trust

LEFT Tired of his foster father Dong Zhuo's violent outbursts, Lü Bu murdered him

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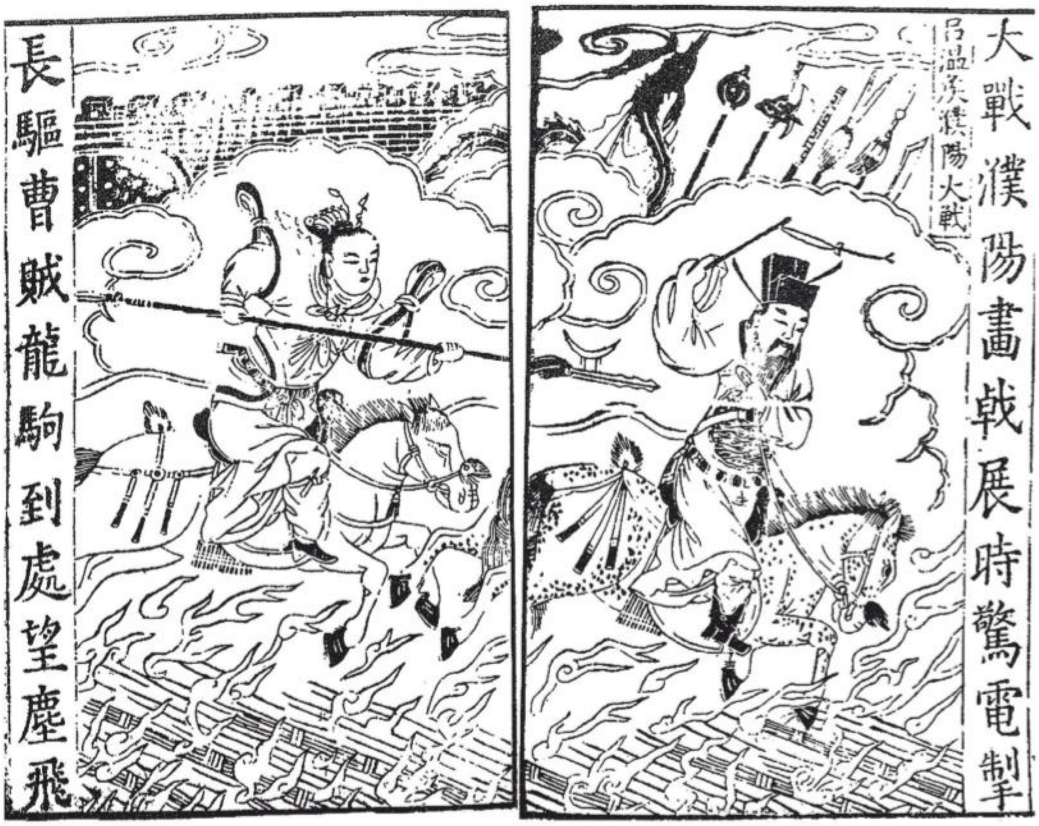
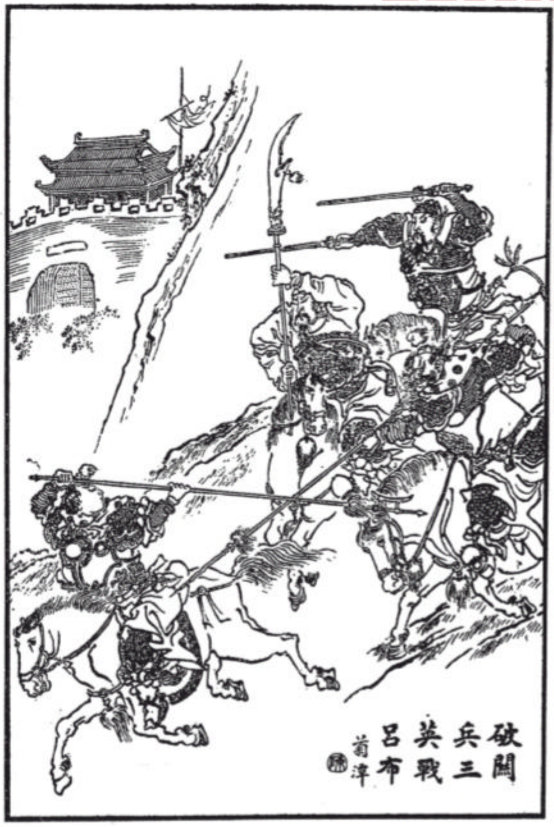
“LÜ BU HAD DONG ZHUO’S HEAD DISPLAYED ON HIS SADDLE AS A TROPHY”

merely carrying out an order and struck him down. In a final display of disrespect, Dong Zhuo’s corpse was left out in the street with a lit candle wick threaded through its navel. The wick burned on the fat of the dead warlord for days, and people were warned that, should they attempt to intervene, they would be put to death. In the end, three city officials attempted to retrieve the body and were executed alongside all those loyal to Dong Zhuo.

From outside of Chang’an, followers loyal to Dong Zhuo came to the city to seek an amnesty from execution. When Wang Yun refused their request, they instead formed an army and moved to attack the city. Lü Bu challenged their leader, Guo Si, to a duel. Though he drew the first blood, when the armies regrouped, Lü Bu found himself outmatched and had no choice but to flee. The plan to assassinate Dong Zhuo had been a success, but the aftermath was a disaster.

Lü Bu had Dong Zhuo’s head displayed on his saddle as a trophy when he and


長驅曹賊龍駒到處望塵飛
大戰濮陽畫戟展時驚電掣
呂温侯濮陽大戰



ABOVE Lü Bu pursues Cao Cao on the battlefield

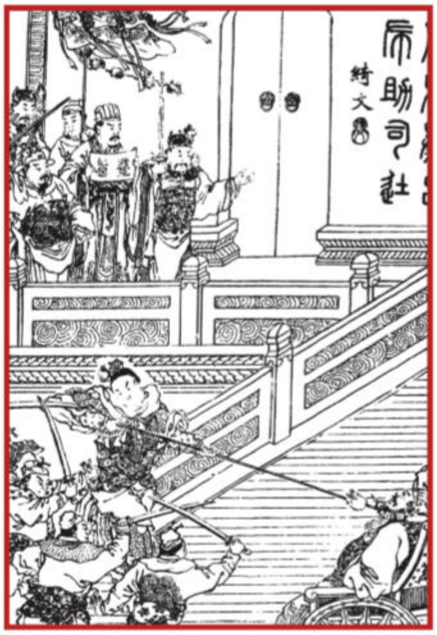
ABOVE-RIGHT A depiction of Lü Bu during the apocryphal Battle of Hulao Pass

his men rode forth to meet warlord Yuan Shu. As a long-term opponent of Dong Zhuo, Lü Bu made a gift of his former mentor's head to Yuan Shu and expected to be greeted warmly. However, with his reputation for betrayal preceding him, Yuan Shu kept Lü Bu at arm's length. It was still a warmer welcome than the one he received from another warlord, Yuan Shao, who planned an assassination attempt that Lü Bu only just escaped.

Lü Bu travelled on, seizing Puyang and appointing himself governor of Yan Province. Many joined his forces in a battle against the warlord Cao Cao, which is said to have lasted for 100 days. When famine and disease laid waste to the area Cao Cao claimed the victory, forcing Lü Bu to seek shelter with another warlord, Liu Bei. Though Lü Bu was respectful to Liu Bei, the latter understandably didn't trust him, anticipating that betrayal would soon follow. His judgement was proven right when Yuan Shu contacted Lü Bu and thanked him for his loyalty and the part he played in defeating Dong Zhuo. He explained that Liu Bei had started a ruinous war with him and wanted Lü Bu's help in dealing with Liu Bei once and for all. If he would take the job, Yuan Shu promised Lü Bu all the supplies and armaments he needed.

Lü Bu accepted the offer and burned the city of Xiapi, taking Liu Bei's family as captives. Outmatched and outnumbered, Liu Bei surrendered to Lü Bu. However, Yuan Shu's promised supplies had not arrived, and Lü Bu believed that he had not upheld his end of the bargain. Instead of taking Liu Bei prisoner, he gave him an official role and declared himself governor of Xu Province.

In 196 CE, Lü Bu survived an attempted coup by his own men, but others were rallying their forces against him. Yuan Shu attempted to broker peace by arranging a marriage between his son and Lü Bu's daughter, an arrangement that Lü Bu initially approved of. However, he changed his mind, instead having Yuan Shu's envoy executed when he came to collect the bride. Furious, Yuan Shu formed an alliance with military leaders Han Xian and Yang Feng, but even their combined forces were unable to defeat the seemingly untouchable Lü Bu.



RIGHT Lü Bu assassinates Dong Zhuo with a ji, a type of polearm

LEFT Today Lü Bu is a familiar character in Chinese literature, theatre and opera

His luck ran out in 198 CE when Cao Cao laid siege to Xiapi. Seeking assistance, Lü Bu sent word to Yuan Shu, who was in no rush to help. The siege went on for months until, on 7 February 199 CE, Lü Bu accepted that all hope of victory or escape was lost. He told his men to kill him and present his severed head to Cao Cao, and when they refused he surrendered to Cao Cao in person. At first he attempted to negotiate and offered to join forces with his enemy, but Lü Bu's opponents had grown tired of his betrayals. Cao Cao had Lü Bu executed by hanging, ending his chaotic career once and for all.

Brave, ferocious and endlessly ambitious, Lü Bu was an undeniably talented warrior, but with his penchant for cross and double cross, he lacked the strategic skills and long-term vision needed to truly excel as a leader in the nuanced but cut-throat world of ancient China. Making and breaking alliances as it suited his needs in the moment, he was unable to forge the sort of long-term bonds that might have helped him turn his victories into something more permanent. Ultimately, in the final siege, there was nobody for Lü Bu to call upon for aid. He had played the traitor once too often. ○

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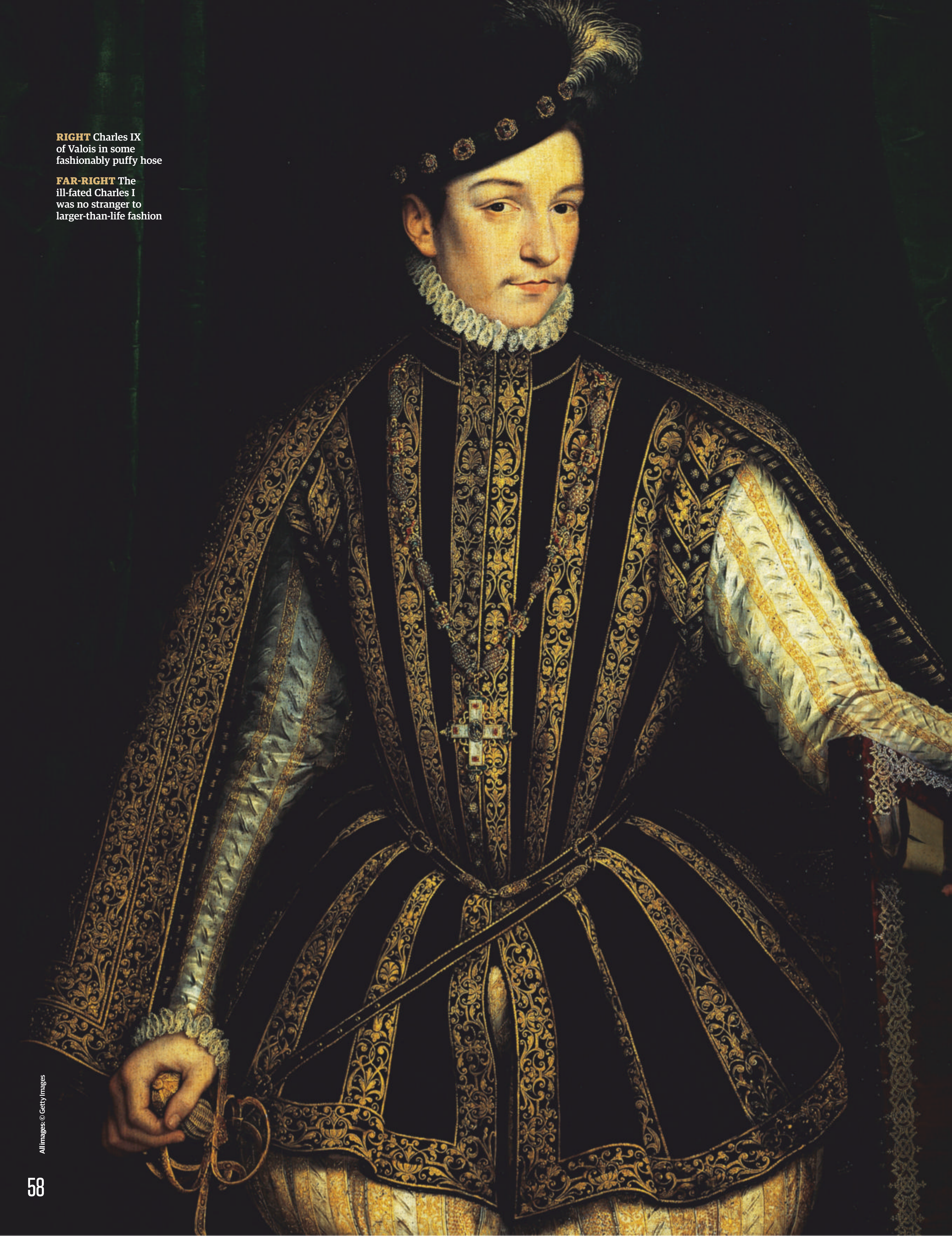

RIGHT Charles IX of Valois in some fashionably puffy hose

FAR-RIGHT The ill-fated Charles I was no stranger to larger-than-life fashion

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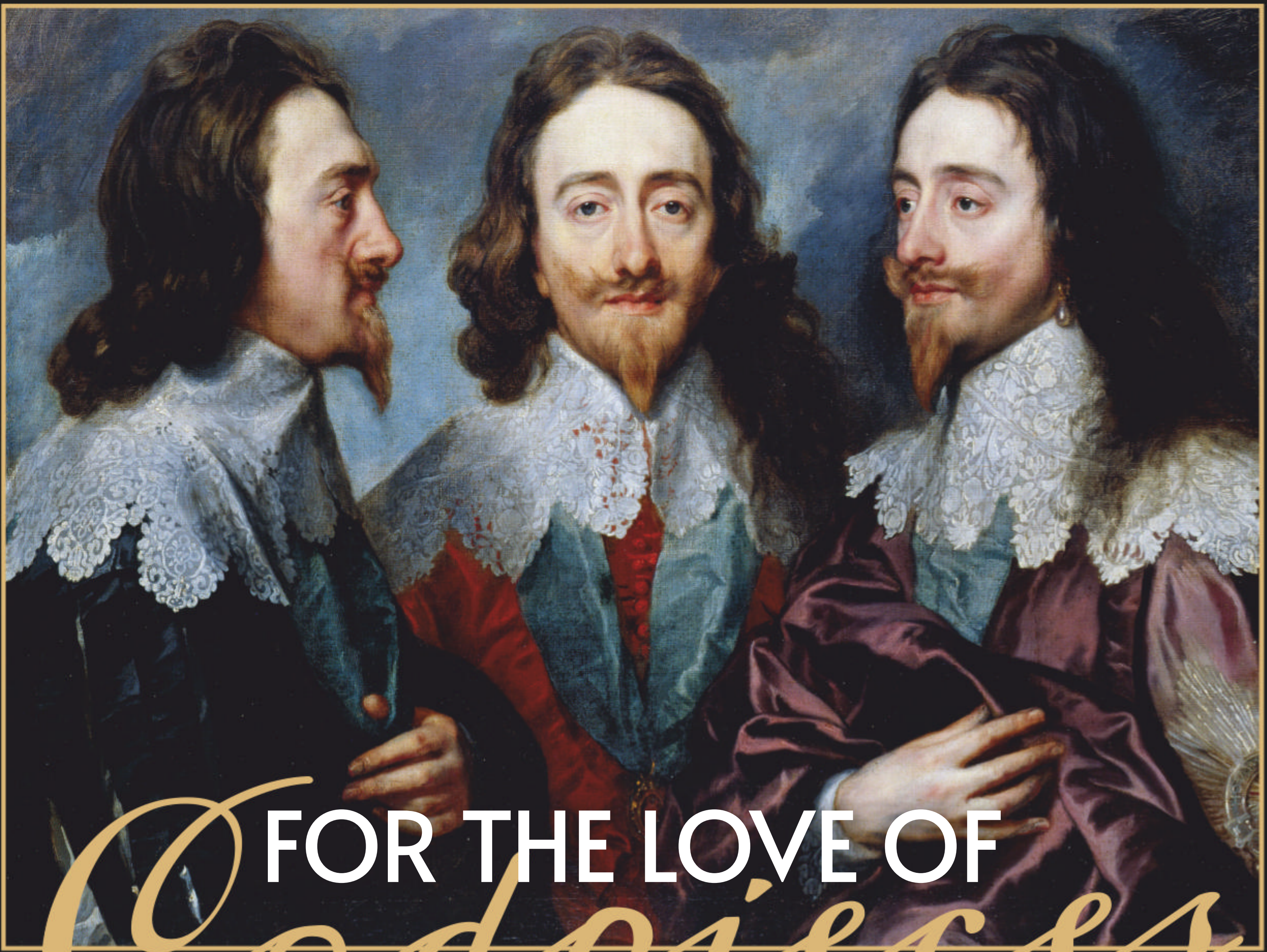


FOR THE LOVE OF Codpieces

When skirts, tights and frills were the hallmarks of masculinity

Written by Mark Dolan

Walking through the womenswear section of a clothing shop into the men's section is to feel the clouds darken the atmosphere as different shapes, bright colours and styles give way to plain blue, black and grey jackets, trousers and waistcoats. But it wasn't always like this. In the 400-odd years before the French Revolution, men (well, rich ones) would adorn themselves in bright colours, luxurious fabrics and extravagant silhouettes.

'Fashion' in a way we might recognise today first emerged in the second half of the 14th century, when men started to don garments more shapely and tailored than the simple, if practical, tunic. The gipon, or doublet, was the first iteration of this, a garment that was cinched around the waist and padded around the chest. Coming only to the knees, it was almost immediately dubbed indecent by the moralists of the day.

In the early 15th century wealthy men would wear their doublets, by now often made of silk rather than wool, under a long outer garment called a houppelande. Men and women alike wore houppelandes, but it was upper-class men whose clothes were the most colourful, expensive and extravagant. While almost everyone in the French court - the hub of fashion at this time - was wearing a houppelande, there were ways to make them stand out. They could be brightly coloured, either full length or 'bastard length' (with the hem around the mid-calf), with cavernous funnel-shaped bombard sleeves or baggy poke sleeves that narrowed at the wrist, and would be elaborated by the technique of dagging (cutting shapes out of the edges of sleeves and hems). Fashionable full-length houppelandes would sometimes be so long they'd pool around the wearer's feet, while bombard sleeves quickly grew so oversized that in Italy a law was passed limiting them to a maximum width of 1.2m. Finishing off a look with a pair of poulaines – extremely pointy shoes – meant that the fashionable early 15th-century man would be almost unable to move. Luckily, if you could afford to put together such an outfit, there wasn't a huge amount of moving that needed to be done.

In mid-15th century Northern Europe, partly thanks to the influence of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy, who wore exclusively black clothes, menswear shifted away from bright colours and long, flowing outerwear towards tighter fitting, shorter outer garments and darker colours. The preferred look of the duke and his followers consisted of a tight-fitting doublet hose (with the ties pulled apart to reveal a sliver of the linen undershirt) which were fitted leggings tied to the doublet with laces, and a luxurious fur-lined houppelande, perhaps lined with gold thread.

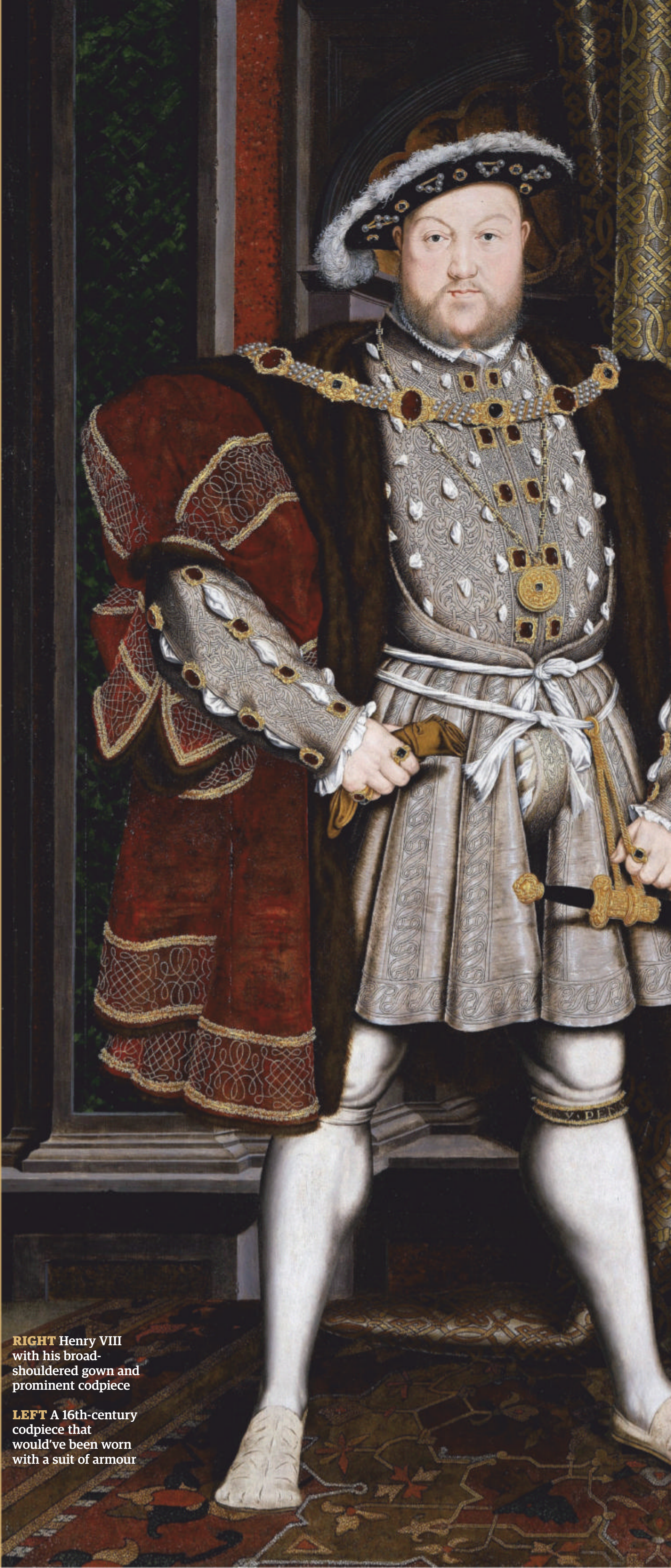
The doublet and hose, the contemporary staples of menswear, didn't meet or overlap in the middle. Attached together by laces, if a man wasn't wearing another layer over the top, his underwear (a decidedly unsexy pair of plain linen drawers) would be visible. As the outer layers of clothing got shorter and shorter in the mid-late 15th century, there was a need to change the hose from two separate pieces for each leg into a complete lower garment. Enter the codpiece. Initially a purely functional part of this new garment, it would soon take on a fashionable life of its own.

One man who took lavishness to a new level was Philip the Good's son, Charles the Bold. Although, at first glance, Charles' gaudy jewel-encrusted attire seems a far cry from his father's all-black wardrobe, there is some continuity between them. Where Philip had heavy jewellery and gold thread, Charles used various precious stones, and both were fond of luxurious Italian fabrics. In January 1474, arriving to formally take possession of the Duchy of Burgundy, Charles turned up wearing a suit of armour that had jewels embedded into the arm and knee plates, with a pearl-embroidered giornea, an Italian-style coat with cut-out sleeves, to allow his jewel-encrusted arms to show through.

Some of Charles' most notable pieces were his multiple jewel-covered ducal hats. In 1471, he commissioned a hat made of steel, covered with gold and with layers of rubies and pearls running around it. Another one appeared in 1475 made of black velvet, covered with rubies, pearls and diamonds packed so close together that the gold plume that topped it was barely visible.

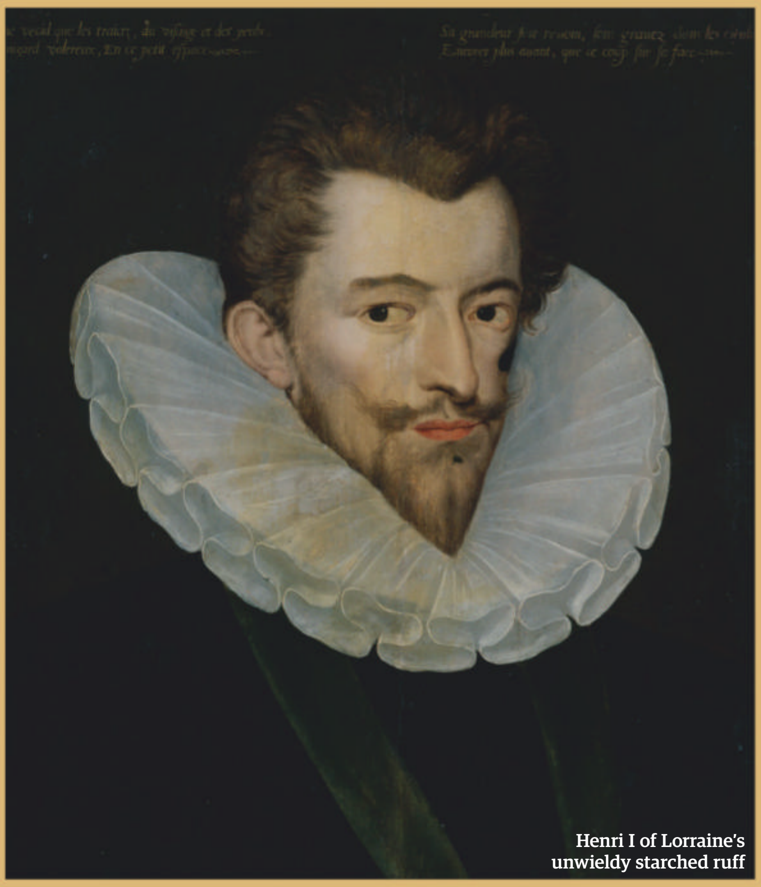
At the end of the 15th century, young men began to forego any outer garment at all, while the doublet and hose, which were still the predominant men's garments, got tighter and tighter. Hose were skin-tight, while doublets became intentionally too small, leading to gaping down the centre of the chest and a gap between doublet and hose at the back, occasionally covered by a small skirt. To add to the bold look, many men wore parti-coloured clothes, with contrasting colours for the constituent parts of their garments. The ideal look for the fashion-conscious man at this time was to give an impression of being colourfully nude.

By the 16th century, parti-colouring and pointy poulaines fell out of favour for layered colours and broad-toed duckbill shoes, while the new fashion of slashing and pinking emerged. Slashing and pinking



RIGHT Henry VIII with his broad-shouldered gown and prominent codpiece

LEFT A 16th-century codpiece that would've been worn with a suit of armour



Henri I of Lorraine's unwieldy starched ruff

involved cutting small slits into outer garments to show the colour of the layer beneath; an effect also achieved by paning – a style of constructing sleeves or hose using parallel strips of fabric joined only at the ends. Brightly coloured skin-tight hose, complete with codpiece, held up with garters and slashed to reveal a contrasting under layer, were the height of fashion for noble young men throughout the Continent.

Although in some parts of Europe, notably Spain, dark, demure clothing gained popularity, in other areas, particularly Germany, menswear was anything but. A great example of early 16th-century German fashion is Lucas Cranach the Elder's portrait of Duke Henry the Pious, whose red doublet and hose and black gown are pinked to within an inch of their lives to show the bright yellow fabric worn underneath, with the look finished off with heavy gold chains and green garters.

The 1520s saw accessories become a standout feature, with upper-class men frequently carrying a sword and a pair of gloves (generally of fine material such as kidskin), while proto-ruffs – upturned collars with decorative frills – also started to appear. Into the next decade, fashion at court in England and Northern Europe was led by Henry VIII. The hallmarks of his overtly masculine image were the extremely broad shoulders of his gown and his prominent codpiece. Although the overall shape is familiar to modern ideas of masculinity, the embroidered fabrics, frills and tassels that were popular in this era are far removed from the sleek, sharp lines that define much of modern men's fashion.

It was in this period, around the mid-16th century, that the codpiece really had its heyday. It became a key part of the male image, often padded, coloured or shaped to be particularly prominent, in some cases poking through a specially made gap in a doublet. Tailors even became quite playful with what a codpiece could be, with some even used as pincushions!

In the second half of the century, although codpieces continued to be popular, the silhouette narrowed dramatically. The broad-shouldered look of Henry VIII was replaced by a more natural, slim shape. As the upper body slimmed, the lower body bloomed, with hose getting shorter and wider. The new style was for bombasted hose, which were padded around the upper thigh and often paned, eventually blooming to the enormous melon hose. Around the same time, codpieces started to shrink and collars began to grow, with the frilled ruff gaining traction, spread initially by Robert Dudley, Elizabeth I's favourite, and getting bigger until it reached 'platter-size' in the 1580s.

While the slimmer silhouette remained the preference for late-16th-century men, a new trend emerged for a protruding lower part of the doublet, known as a peascod. The garment would be made with this rounded aspect, exclusively bulging at the front over the top of the hose, while the rest of the man's waist would remain slim, making it obvious that the impression of the overhanging belly was out of stylistic choice rather than necessity.

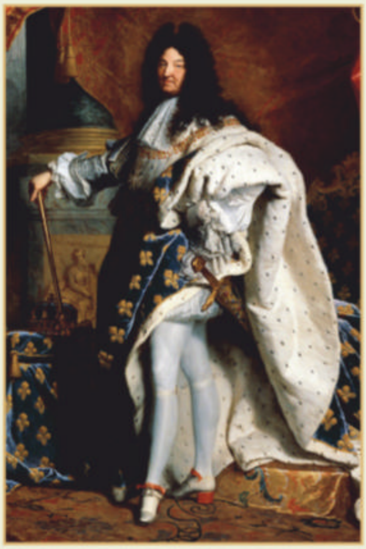
The early 17th century saw the peascod sucked back in to revert to the fully slim upper body, while hose stayed very full ▶

Louisboutins

Four centuries before Christian Louboutin, red heels made their debut in France

Louis XIV, the Sun King, loved fashion and had a big influence on it. While one of his transformational innovations was the justaucorps, the long overcoat that would end the 350-year reign of the doublet, two of his others concern the head and feet. The first was his adoption of a long, flowing curly periwig. His particular wig was full at the bottom and rose to two horn-like points at the top. Before long, periwigs were dominant among the upper class of French society, as well as in England. Towards the end of the century, an ageing Louis started to powder his wigs white, and almost immediately across France and England men began powdering their wigs in the same manner, regardless of whether their age suited it. A large powdered wig, if made from human hair, could cost the equivalent of over £2,000 in today's money.

Meanwhile, Louis' footwear made a range of statements. His high-heeled shoes (he was just 1.63m tall) were covered in silk, brocade or other expensive materials, ornately decorated, and adorned with rosettes or buckles, sometimes made of cut glass. His unique addition was to have a bright red heel. These would be covered in red Morocco leather or painted red, a style which became a hallmark and subsequently a trend throughout the French court. Louis' decorative heels didn't stop there, though. In addition to the red, he also wore heels painted with landscapes, battle scenes and, it is said, even risqué portraits.



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but extended down the leg, into breeches that would go down below the knee, with stockings below. While there wasn't a major overhaul of the men's clothing at court, there was a new style: decorative melancholia, with men opting for open shirts, unbuttoned doublets, creased or ruffled fabrics and an overall impression of dishevelment. This fashionable countenance didn't dominate, though, and many men were still dressing sharply, often sporting the new pointed doublet that swept France and England in the 1630s, sometimes newly paired with knee-high leather boots and the 'leg of mutton' breeches that had replaced short puffy hose.

These long leather boots quickly took off, and were often embellished with decorative down-turned flaps at the top, trimmed with lace and featuring butterfly shaped latchets for fastening. The high, starched ruffs of the late 16th century also faded away, with falling lace collars the vogue of the early 1600s.

> “TAILORS EVENTUALLY BECAME QUITE PLAYFUL WITH WHAT A CODPIECE COULD BE”

During much of the early-mid 17th century, war - first the Thirty Years' then the English Civil War - stymied the evolution and lavishness of fashion, but a few notable changes still took place, not least the early development of what would become the cravat. As long cascading hair become stylish, the wide lace collars of the late 16th and early 17th centuries became obscured, and some noblemen took to tying them in a bow at the front so they would remain visible and prominent. In England, under Oliver Cromwell's rule, clothing became generally more subdued, although there was a burgeoning fashion in England and throughout Europe for excessive use of ribbon for decorating edges, with ruffles also emerging from the cuffs and hem of doublets.

By the 1660s, breeches had billowed out more, but without being gathered at the hem. Instead, they hung straight but extremely wide, gaining the name 'petticoat breeches' and being wide enough for someone to put both legs through one side, as Samuel Pepys wrote of a Mr Townsend doing, not noticing his mistake all day. Of course, these were copiously adorned with ribbon. One surviving outfit, comprising a doublet and pair of petticoat breeches belonging to the politician Edmund Verney, used a total of 198m of ribbon for decoration!

Around the same time, Louis XIV introduced a new type of outer garment to the French court: the justaucorps. This was a long, largely shapeless overcoat with short sleeves, drawn from military uniform. Charles II soon introduced a similar garment, a collarless long overcoat, to the English court, where it led to the simplification of petticoat breeches and the widespread adoption of the cravat. The frilly nature of the new necktie aligned perfectly with the taste for ribbon and ruffles.

The dominance of the justaucorps, which left only the front of the doublet visible, led to them being simplified, with only the front made of embroidered or decorative material. Similarly, breeches once again shrank closer to the leg as visibility was reduced.

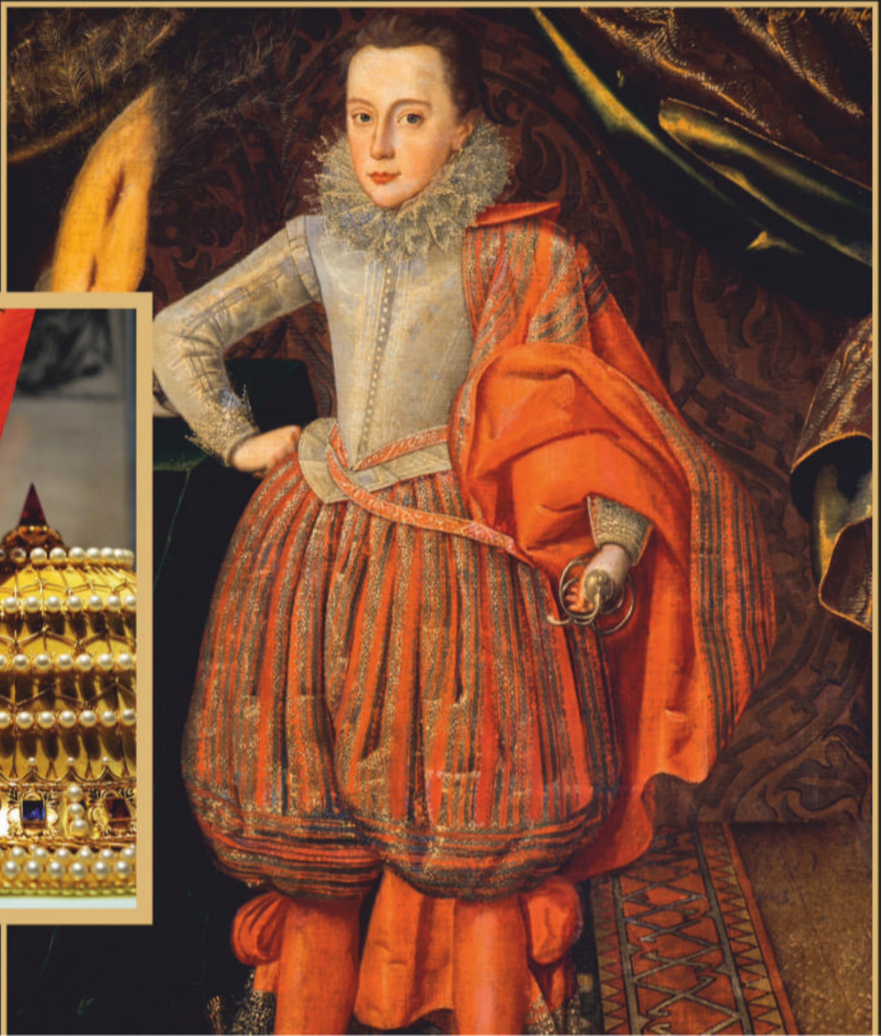
In the 18th century, men's fashion remained fairly consistent, with a basic outfit made up of breeches, a waistcoat and a long overcoat, often with a cravat. Although excessive ribbons and ruffles had fallen out of favour, the garments would be made from fine materials, silks and brocades, and were elaborately embroidered. While the basic silhouette remained relatively unchanged, wealth was displayed through materials, right down to the buttons and thread.

In an echo of the earlier taste for fashionable dishevelment, in the early 18th century some wealthy men, particularly those of an artistic or literary bent, such as Jonathan Swift, would sit for their portraits in their informal morning or nightgowns; loose, flowing garments that conveyed a kind of elegant undress.

Towards the middle of the century, the bottom of men's coats began to flare out again, and the sleeve cuffs broadened, but otherwise there was relatively little change in garments. During this period, in England, while expensive materials and stylish embellishment were still used, the most spectacular outfits were found on the Continent. As the century drew towards its close, frock coats grew more form-fitting and, although stylish and lavishly made, were relatively simple in construction and silhouette. As the English style gained popularity among the French, waistcoats were made more decorative, with designs often inspired by nature, literature or even popular theatre. At the end of the 18th century, though, the upheaval of the French Revolution would indelibly change the development of men's fashion. ○

BELOW-LEFT A reconstruction of one of Charles the Bold's bejewelled golden hats

BELOW A young King Charles I in roomy petticoat breeches



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BALTIMORE

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA
12-15 SEPTEMBER 1814

Written by David Smith

Relations between Britain and its former colonies had been prickly ever since the United States won its independence, and there were many friction points between the two nations. Even so, a declaration of war in 1812 (the first time the USA had declared war on a foreign power) still seemed to catch both parties by surprise.

There was little appetite for war and neither side was in much of a position to fight one. Great Britain had all it could handle with the Napoleonic Wars, while the American armed forces were weak. The declaration itself appears to have been unexpected – President James Madison brought a list of grievances before Congress in June 1812 and they narrowly voted for war.

With neither side fully engaged, the conflict meandered on for more than two years, with much of the fighting focussed around the Canadian border. Things changed in 1814, with the defeat of Napoleon. Britain now had troops available for more serious operations, and the Chesapeake Bay was chosen as the best area to attack.

Operations in the bay were primarily intended to be a diversion to relieve pressure on British forces defending Canada. Risks were to be kept to a minimum because there was a major offensive planned in the Gulf of Mexico later in the year. A successful raid on Washington, DC, famously ended with the burning of the White House on 24 August 1814, and for a while it appeared as though operations in the Chesapeake were at an end.

Admiral Alexander Cochrane was wary of continuing operations in the region because the malarial season was about to begin, and he favoured keeping British troops healthy for the planned shift of focus to the Gulf. Other British officers felt that they had established momentum in the Chesapeake and should return there. Cochrane and Major General Robert Ross were eventually persuaded to mount another raid, and Baltimore was the chosen target.

Baltimore was a major port and a key cog in the American economy. It was also notoriously pro-French – as such, there was an impulse on the British side to make it pay for the temerity of declaring war on Britain and defying the Royal Navy. The burning of the White House had been a headline grabber, but it was the expedition against Baltimore where Britain betrayed its real desire to punish the Americans and teach the entire town a lesson it would never forget.

Baltimore was far from unprepared. An ominous orange glow in the night sky, evidence of the burning of the capital, had awed the residents of the city on the night of 24 August, but since then they had been readying themselves in the belief that they would be next.

Anticipating an assault from the east, the Americans constructed an impressive line of defensive works in front of Hampstead Hill – trenches entwined with batteries that housed as many as 100 guns. Guarding the entry into the harbour was Fort McHenry, which was still in a state of disrepair two years after the war had started. With an attack imminent, work was undertaken to get it into a defensible condition, which included the mounting of guns from the French warship L'Eole.

In this manner, the fort was provided with the teeth to resist an approach by the Royal Navy, with heavy 42-pounders (19kg) providing the main armament. More 42-pounders were placed in batteries around the site of the fort, on Whetstone Point, with infantry in position to fend off any attempted landing. The preparations were complete by 10 September, which turned out to be just in time.

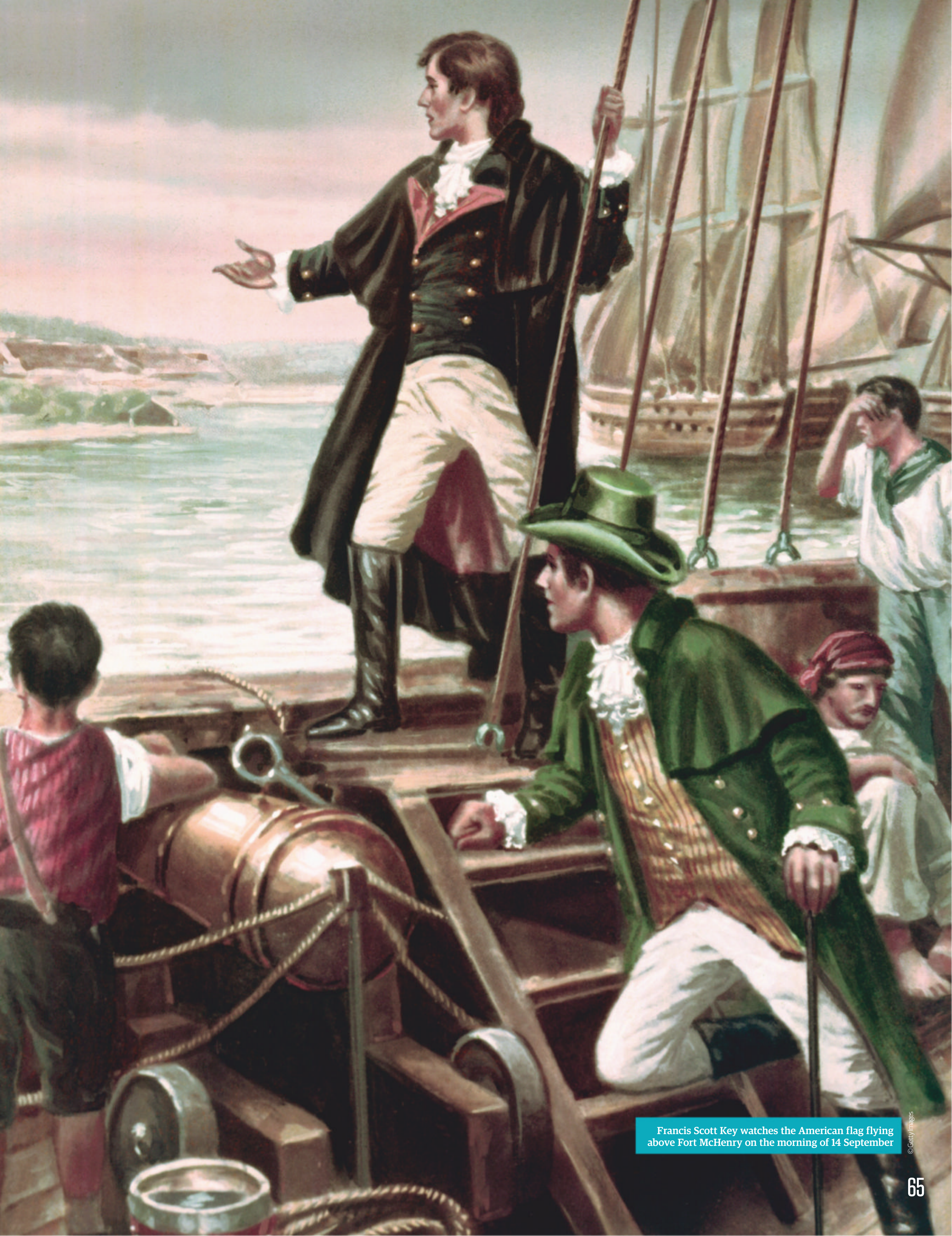
General Ross, with close to 5,000 troops, landed at North Point in the early hours of 12 September and began to move westwards towards the city. The naval element of the assault on Baltimore would not begin for another day so, for now at least, the fate of the city rested in the hands of the troops who manned the defensive works to the east of the city.

THE SEA AND LAND OFFENSIVE

The defensive line awaiting the British was 1.6km long and its construction had been supervised by a French engineer, Maximilian Godefroy. Although extensive enough to accommodate more than 10,000 defenders, a considerably smaller number would do the fighting in the battle to come because of a bold decision by Major General Samuel Smith of the Maryland militia, who commanded American forces. He had established an effective early warning system, using mounted couriers to travel between observation stations, which gave the Americans ample notice of the British fleet's movements.

At noon on Sunday, 11 September, a three-gun salute alerted the troops in Baltimore that the British were approaching. The guns interrupted church services throughout the city and one reverend allegedly released his flock with the words: "The Lord bless King George, convert him, and take him to heaven, as we want no more of him."

Later that day, General Smith sent Brigadier General John Stricker to meet the anticipated British advance, adopting a more active defence than the one that had failed so miserably outside Washington. Stricker, a 55-year-old veteran of the War of Independence, took the Third Brigade and headed east. The



Francis Scott Key watches the American flag flying above Fort McHenry on the morning of 14 September

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brigade, comprising the best men under Smith's command, was made up of five militia regiments, three volunteer rifle companies, a six-gun battery and a regiment of militia cavalry. The total force numbered around 3,000 men, meaning they would be outnumbered by the 4,700 men under Ross.

Stricker led his men to a position about 11km east of the main defensive lines, at a place where two creeks created a natural bottleneck. Bread and Cheese Creek to the north and Bear Creek to the south cut onto the land to create a 1.6km-wide corridor through which the British would have to pass. The Americans assumed a position that offered defence in depth – splitting themselves into three lines, they awaited the British advance, while a screen of riflemen and the 140-strong cavalry regiment advanced even further eastwards, from where the British were expected to approach.

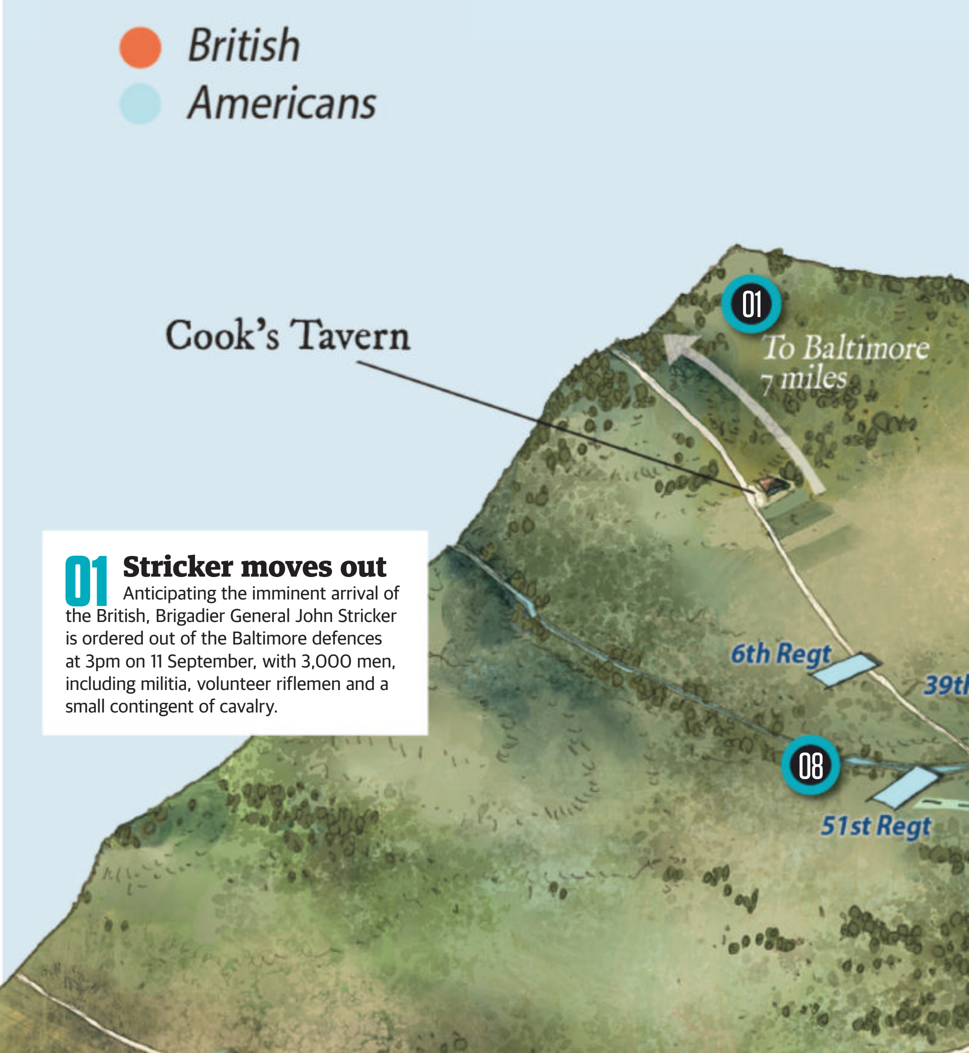
The British landings started at 3am on 12 September, and four hours later General Ross was ready to push forward with his light infantry, eager to feel out the American position while the remainder of his men were landed. Ross had every intention of attacking as early as possible, but in the suffocating heat, movement was sluggish and several men passed out. He paused for breakfast and consulted with his fellow officers. Stricker became concerned that the British advance might be so slow that their attack would not materialise until darkness had fallen, which would put his militia at a serious disadvantage. He pushed two infantry companies and one rifle company forward in hopes of stinging the British into action. They succeeded more than he could have imagined possible.

The advancing Americans, under the command of Major Richard K Heath and numbering around 220, met the advancing British light infantry and the first serious fighting of the day began. In the confusion, Ross believed he was facing a far more substantial defensive force and determined to bring up the rest of his men before pushing forward. As he turned to give an order, he was hit by rifle fire and buckshot in the arm, the bullets penetrating into his chest. He fell from his horse, mortally wounded. The advancing British column became anxious when they saw their general's horse running past them, its flanks streaked with blood, and soon they were marching past the point where the dying general was being tended to.

Command fell to Colonel Arthur Brooke, who had no specific instructions from Ross but knew his intention had been to attack. He advanced towards the American position on the neck of land between the two creeks, and then paused while he assessed the situation. The American position was clearly strong (and once more the British over-estimated American numbers, making them cautious), but Brooke spotted a potential weakness and sent a regiment to his right to outflank the American line.

These men, the 4th Regiment of Foot, swung wide on their march while the British disguised the movement with artillery and rocket fire. Stricker spotted the outflanking move and attempted to reorganise his position to counter it. By mid-afternoon the battlefield was a dazzling sight as burning farm buildings and haystacks added to the brutal heat.

Stricker's reorganisation of his line ran into difficulties and the 4th Regiment reached its intended position as confusion temporarily hampered the Americans. The 4th's band struck up as a full-scale attack began around 2:50pm. It was instantly met by a volley from the defenders and canister fire from the American artillery. Perhaps inevitably, some of the militia were unable to stand their ground against the ▶

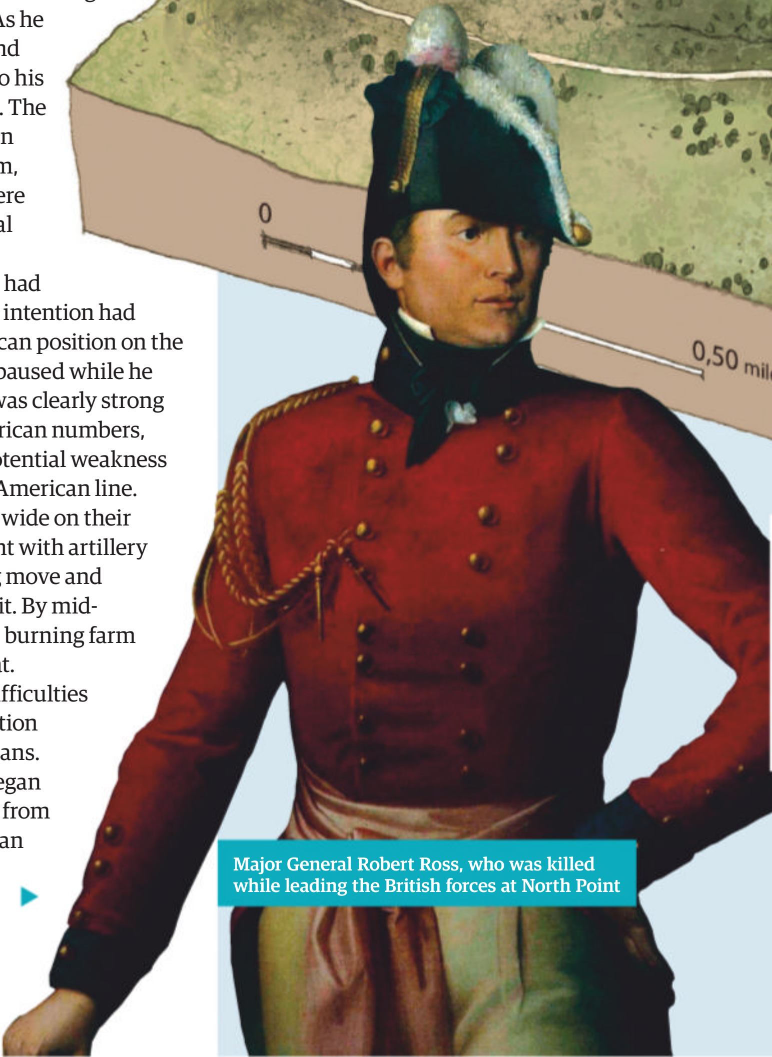


01 Stricker moves out

Anticipating the imminent arrival of the British, Brigadier General John Stricker is ordered out of the Baltimore defences at 3pm on 11 September, with 3,000 men, including militia, volunteer riflemen and a small contingent of cavalry.

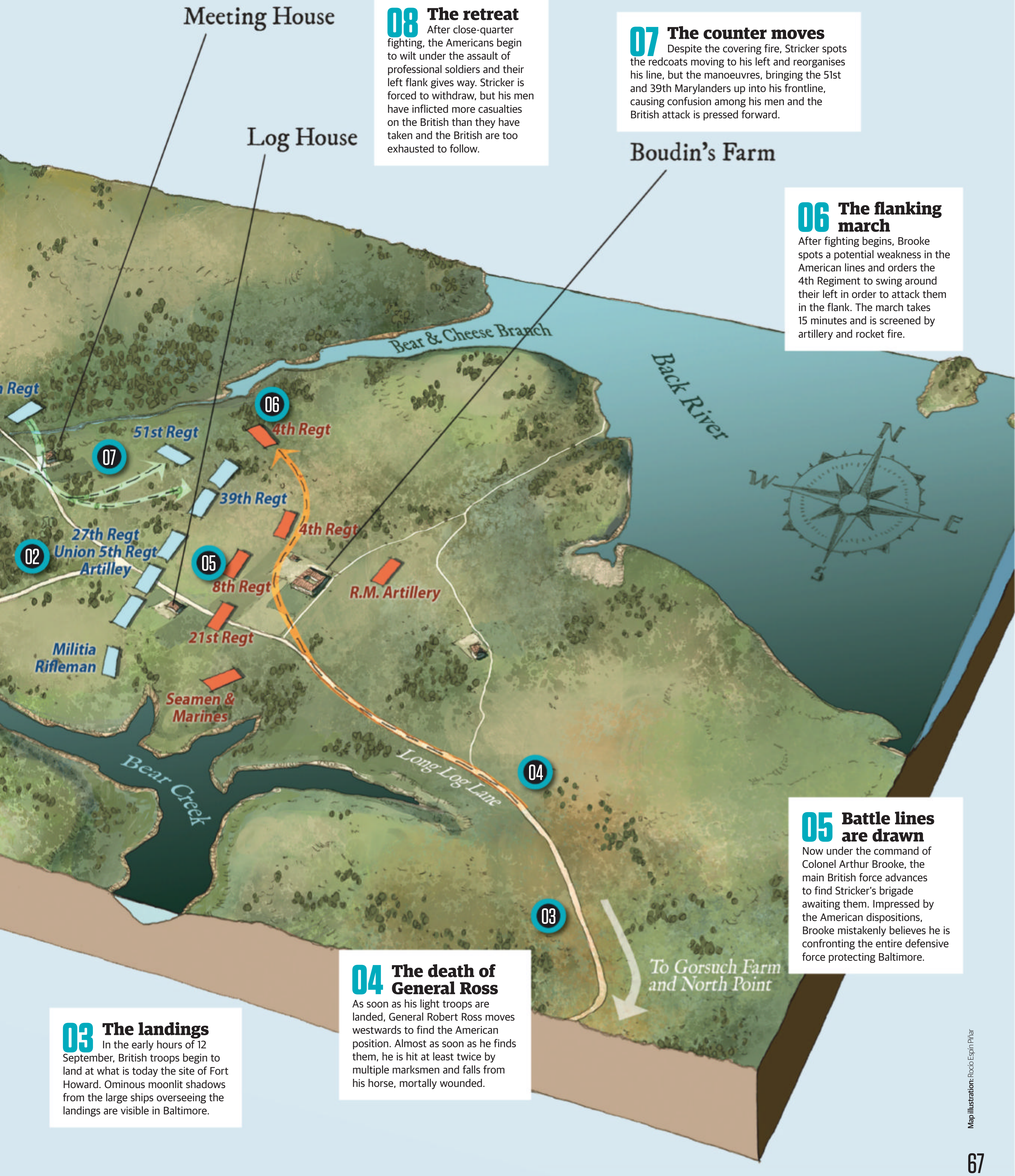
02 The defensive position

At 8pm Stricker takes up a deep defensive position, with his troops arranged in three lines on a narrow neck of land between two creeks. A ridge of high ground behind his position offers a position to fall back upon if needed.



Major General Robert Ross, who was killed while leading the British forces at North Point

© Alamy


Meeting House
Log House
Boudin's Farm
Bear & Cheese Branch
Back River
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39th Regt
27th Regt
Union 5th Regt
Artilley
02
05
4th Regt
8th Regt
R.M. Artillery
21st Regt
Militia
Rifleman
Seamen &
Marines
Bear Creek
Long Log Lane
04
03
To Gorsuch Farm
and North Point

03 The landings

In the early hours of 12 September, British troops begin to land at what is today the site of Fort Howard. Ominous moonlit shadows from the large ships overseeing the landings are visible in Baltimore.

04 The death of General Ross

As soon as his light troops are landed, General Robert Ross moves westwards to find the American position. Almost as soon as he finds them, he is hit at least twice by multiple marksmen and falls from his horse, mortally wounded.

05 Battle lines are drawn

Now under the command of Colonel Arthur Brooke, the main British force advances to find Stricker's brigade awaiting them. Impressed by the American dispositions, Brooke mistakenly believes he is confronting the entire defensive force protecting Baltimore.

06 The flanking march

After fighting begins, Brooke spots a potential weakness in the American lines and orders the 4th Regiment to swing around their left in order to attack them in the flank. The march takes 15 minutes and is screened by artillery and rocket fire.

07 The counter moves

Despite the covering fire, Stricker spots the redcoats moving to his left and reorganises his line, but the manoeuvres, bringing the 51st and 39th Marylanders up into his frontline, causing confusion among his men and the British attack is pressed forward.

08 The retreat

After close-quarter fighting, the Americans begin to wilt under the assault of professional soldiers and their left flank gives way. Stricker is forced to withdraw, but his men have inflicted more casualties on the British than they have taken and the British are too exhausted to follow.

Map illustration: Rocío Espín Piñar

remorseless approach of regular infantry, and the 51st Maryland Regiment broke, taking some of the 39th Marylanders with them, but the bulk of the American line stood its ground. After closing to within about 18m of the Americans, Brooke ordered his men to unleash a volley and then charge home with the bayonet. The ensuing struggle lasted ten minutes, before the American left flank crumbled and Stricker was forced to disengage.

Thoughts of a pursuit did not last long. Both sides were exhausted after fighting in the debilitating heat. Brooke wanted to take time to reorganise his men, and there was a considerable casualty list to deal with. The British had lost 39 dead, including their general, with a further 251 wounded and 50 missing. The Americans had suffered 24 killed, 139 wounded and 50 captured. British losses were higher, but as the Americans had withdrawn this was considered a British victory, albeit far from decisive.

No more fighting was possible for the rest of the day, and rain showers added an extra element of misery for the tired men from both sides. Advised that the Royal Navy would begin a bombardment of Fort McHenry the following day, Brooke prepared his command to advance again on the 13th and they moved forward slowly under increasingly heavy rain, navigating felled trees that blocked their path. From around 6am they could enjoy the sound of the naval bombardment that was raining down on Fort McHenry. The second stage of the Battle for Baltimore had begun.

FORT MCHENRY UNDER SIEGE

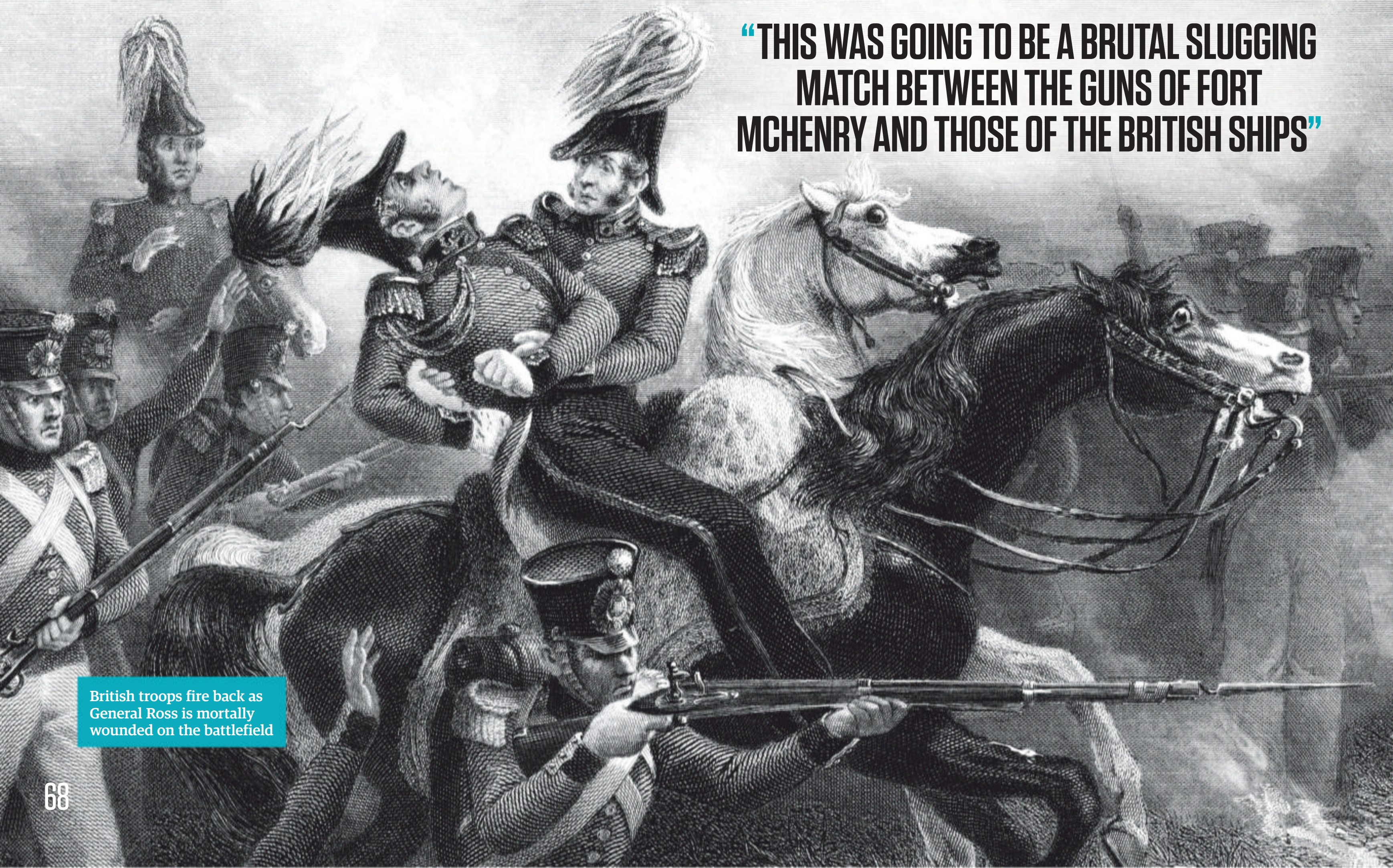
As well as the main fort, Baltimore's harbour mouth was further protected by a boom made up of a heavy chain and masts, backed up by hulks – decrepit ships that had been held in place and then sunk on the approach of the British. Eight barges, each carrying a single eight- or 12-pounder gun (3.6-5.4kg), backed up the hulks, and a three-gun battery at Lazaretto Point, across the harbour mouth from Fort McHenry, completed the first line of defences. Further to the west, in case British ships penetrated past the line of obstacles, Fort Babcock and Fort Covington promised more resistance.

The British plan was to put Fort McHenry out of action, then sail into the harbour to enfilade the American lines outside Baltimore while the infantry launched a simultaneous assault from the east. It was a sound plan, but it would require the complete reduction of the fort. While the battle at North Point had been developing on 12 September, British vessels had been painstakingly working their way towards the fort. The depth of the water meant only shallow-draft ships could risk approaching, and even then some of them temporarily ran aground during their manoeuvres. HMS Cockchafer and the frigates Seahorse, Surprise and Severn got within 8km of the fort while five bomb ships (Meteor, Aetna, Devastation, Terror and Volcano) and one rocket ship (Erebus) closed to 4km.

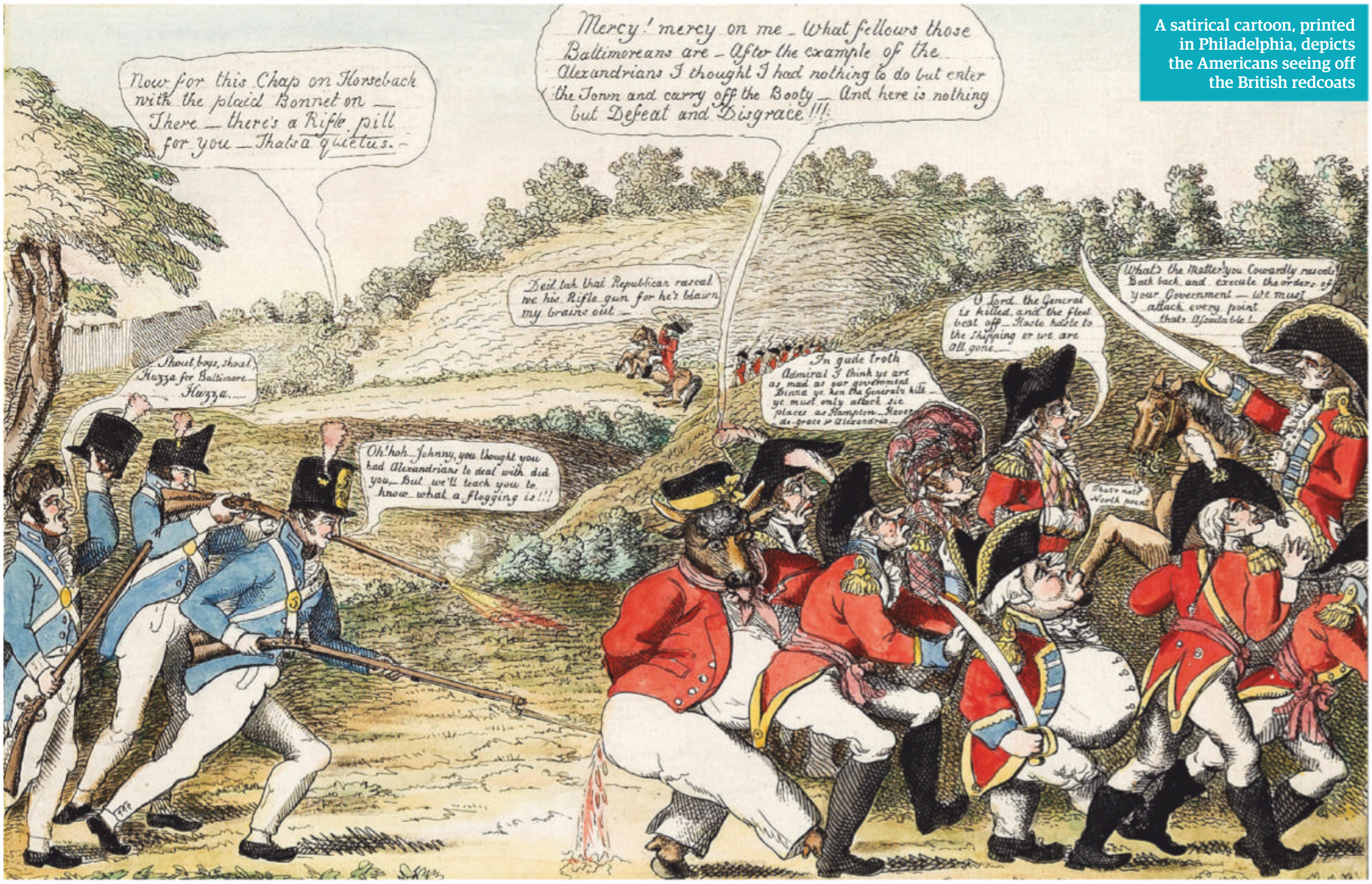
Fearing a landing, the Americans had placed a composite brigade of more than 500 men in the outer ditches of the fort, but no such landing was planned. This was going to be a brutal slugging match between the guns of Fort McHenry and those of the British ships. Those ships remained in position overnight, out of range of the fort's guns, but at 5am on the morning of 13 September, Cockchafer, the bomb ships and the rocket ship moved closer and fired some ranging shots. Having strayed a little too close, the fort's guns opened up in response and the British ships quickly withdrew out of range again.

Major George Armistead, commanding at Fort McHenry, knew his guns could no longer reach their targets, but allowed his men to keep firing for an hour to relieve tension and lift their spirits. At 10am the American guns fell silent again and would remain so for

> "THIS WAS GOING TO BE A BRUTAL SLUGGING MATCH BETWEEN THE GUNS OF FORT MCHENRY AND THOSE OF THE BRITISH SHIPS"



British troops fire back as General Ross is mortally wounded on the battlefield


Now for this Chap on Horseback with the plaid Bonnet on — There — there's a Rifle pill for you — That's a quietus. —
Mercy! mercy on me — What fellows those Baltimoreans are — After the example of the Alexandrians I thought I had nothing to do but enter the Town and carry off the Booty — And here is nothing but Defeat and Disgrace!!!
Deil tak that Republican rascal wc his Rifle gun for he's blawn my brains out —
Shout, boys, shout Huzza for Baltimore — Huzza. —
Oh! hoh Johnny, you thought you had Alexandrians to deal with did you — But we'll teach you to know what a flogging is!!!
In gude troth Admiral I think ye are as mad as our government Dinna ye ken the Generals kill — ye must only attack sic places as Hampton — Havre-de-grace & Alexandria —
O Lord the General is killed, and the fleet beat off — Haste haste to the Shipping or we are all gone —
What's the Matter you Cowardly rascals Back back and execute the orders of your Government — We must attack every point that's Assailable!
That's not North point

A satirical cartoon, printed in Philadelphia, depicts the Americans seeing off the British redcoats

the next six hours. The continuing British fire did little damage, but was a terrifying experience for the garrison. Of most concern was the fact that the fort's powder store was not bombproof – one well-placed shot could trigger a huge explosion, so the Americans belatedly spread the powder barrels around the fort, risking numerous small explosions instead of one catastrophic one.

A 24-pounder (11kg) was hit by a British shot around 2pm, killing two of the crew, and the British pressed the attack, closing in to increase the effectiveness of their fire but inviting a response from the fort's guns. Finally allowed to respond, the frustrated American gun crews drove off the British ships once more (the Erebus had to be towed to safety after taking several hits). The bombardment continued as darkness fell, one British sailor recording: "All this night the bombardment continued with unabated vigour; the hissing of rockets, and the fiery shells glittered in the air, threatening destruction as they fell."

It was a poetic description, but not quite as poetic as the words penned by Francis Scott Key, a lawyer who watched the exchange of fire between ships and fort and wrote of the "rocket's red glare" in a poem that would later be adopted as the lyrics for the American national anthem *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Despite the lengthy bombardment, Fort McHenry was never seriously under threat, and a raiding party of 1,200 men failed to land and attack the flank of the fort, being driven off by the guns of Forts Babcock and Covington. The British had been stopped in their tracks.

AFTERMATH

Without the reduction of the fort, the British infantry waiting patiently in the rain were unable to launch their assault on the American defences outside Baltimore. Colonel Brooke toyed with the idea of a night attack, but support from the fleet would be essential given the strength of the American defences. A messenger got through to Admiral Cochrane asking if this was possible, but Cochrane responded that the fleet had failed to subdue Fort McHenry. Brooke had no option but to quietly withdraw under cover of darkness.

The morning of 14 September was one of trepidation for the Americans in Baltimore. Expecting to see the fort in British hands and infantry advancing on their lines, they instead saw the American flag flying from Fort McHenry and empty ground where the British land forces had been waiting. The price paid for the fort's defiance was unbelievably low: an estimated 400 shells had landed directly on or inside the fort, out of as many as 1,800 fired by the various British ships, and just four men had died, with another 24 wounded.

The British assault on Baltimore failed partially due to the formidable defences thrown up by the Americans, which deterred Brooke from launching an infantry assault and made it impossible for Cochrane to get his ships past Fort McHenry. (He was particularly impressed by the sunken hulks that blocked the harbour mouth and made it impossible to even attempt to sail quickly past the fort). Furthermore, the attack was viewed by the British as nothing more than a diversionary raid, and a far more substantial operation was planned for the Gulf of Mexico. Significant casualties at Baltimore would have jeopardised that offensive.

As events turned out, a peace treaty was in place before the final stages of the British offensive rolled into action. The Treaty of Ghent formally ended the War of 1812 on 24 December 1814, but news did not reach America until the final, pointless battle of the war had been fought. Unknown to the British, they had saved their men at Baltimore only to watch more than 2,000 fall as casualties at New Orleans, 15 days after the conflict had officially ended.

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What If...

OPERATION OVERLORD HAD FAILED?

The D-Day landings in WWII saw the Allies breach 'Fortress Europe', but could their failure have led to a Nazi victory?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Madeleine Trigg

JONATHAN TRIGG

Author and broadcaster Trigg is an expert in military history and the history of the Second World War. His book *D-Day Through German Eyes: How The Wehrmacht Lost France* is out now from Amberley Publishing.

On 6 June 1944, 150,000 Allied troops stormed across the beaches of Normandy in Nazi-occupied France. Codenamed Operation Overlord, it was an audacious but ultimately successful attempt to establish a beachhead and begin the liberation of Europe. The biggest amphibious assault ever seen was crucial to Allied victory and its anniversary is widely celebrated. But what if the landings had ended in disaster? Would this have simply delayed the inevitable defeat of Germany? Or could the Axis Powers have crushed their enemies once and for all?

What was the situation in June 1944 prior to the Normandy landings?

In a nutshell, the war is going very well for the Allies but not so well for Nazi Germany. Down on the southern front in Italy, the Allies had broken through the Gustav Line, taking Monte Cassino, and were well on their way to liberating Rome. This would be the first European capital that the Allies liberated. Over in the east, the Red Army, which by now was an absolute megalith, was getting ready to launch Operation Bagration against Army Group Centre. And, of course, in the skies above Germany itself there were constant bombing campaigns. Cities were being reduced to rubble by the Anglo-American bomber fleets, which were destroying German industry and wrecking the Luftwaffe. At this stage of the war the Germans were in real trouble.

What was Operation Overlord?

Operation Overlord was the codename for the Allied invasion of Normandy, of which the D-Day landings were a part. The whole idea of Overlord was a series of amphibious landings across five beaches in Normandy. The Americans would land on two, codenamed Omaha and Utah; the Canadians would land on one, Juno; and the British would land on Sword and Gold. Together they would form what they called a 'lodgement', essentially an area of land big enough to be used as a logistics base and launch pad for further operations. The Allies then intended to march out of Normandy, reach Paris, liberate France and then – from the German border – launch the invasion of Germany itself. Overlord was nothing less than an attempt to breach 'Fortress Europe' and destroy Nazi Germany.

What were the weak points of Operation Overlord where it could faltered?

Operation Overlord was one of the most complex military operations that's ever been conducted, let alone during the Second World War. It's difficult to see how the Nazis could have defeated it but on the day itself there were a couple of instances where things could have potentially gone wrong. The first was on Omaha beach, where the American landings took place. They came very close to pulling all the troops off the beach and trying to land again further down the coast. If they had, the Germans would have been able to split the Allied beaches. But ultimately they didn't – because of the decision of one man: German General Dietrich Kraiss. He was in command of the 352nd Infantry Division and they put huge pressure on the

RIGHT US troops wade ashore under heavy fire during the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944

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ABOVE British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (centre), Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery (right) and Field Marshal Alan Brooke

landing at Omaha. The Americans simply couldn't break through. However, after a couple of hours Kraiss was informed that his troops desperately needed reinforcements and ammunition. He had a regiment in reserve, and a German regiment – 3,000 men – was a powerful beast. Had Kraiss sent these men onto Omaha beach it could have thrown the entire Allied invasion off track. But he was warned that his flanks were struggling and there was a possibility the Allies might attack from behind. Military theory is that you must always protect your flanks and Kraiss did what every professional German general would have done: he sent the regiment to cover them. Militarily, it was logical, but for the Germans on D-Day it was the wrong decision. The Americans were able to move inland.

What was another instance of potential disaster for the Allies?

The second instance involves Sword beach, where the British landed and were advancing inland. The 21st Panzer Division was advancing towards them, and between them was an area of high ground called the Perrier Ridge. Neither side was aware at the time that they were in a race to get to the top, because whoever commanded the top of the ridge had excellent fields of fire against the other. But the British got there first and when they saw a host of Panzers advancing towards the ridge line, they opened fire. It was an ambush and the Germans, who were completely surprised, withdrew in confusion. Some of the accompanying Panzer grenadiers and armoured infantry did manage to find a way through but, with no reinforcements coming, they eventually withdrew.

In terms of the Allied war effort, what would've been some of the immediate consequences if Operation Overlord had failed?

If the landings had failed the first thing that would've happened is that Dwight D Eisenhower, as the overall commander, would've either resigned or been sacked. In fact, he famously had two separate speeches in his uniform pockets: one was for if the landings were successful and the other was for if they failed, in which he took full responsibility. That would

BELOW Over 7,000 ships were involved in the largest seaborne invasion in history

THE PAST

1940

THE FALL OF FRANCE

On 10 May 1940, the German Army numbering over three million men began its blitzkrieg invasion of France and the Low Countries. The British Expeditionary Force, stationed at the Belgian border, stood no chance and the retreating Allied troops were pushed back to the beaches of Dunkirk. Evacuation to England was the only option and in nine days 338,000 Allied troops were rescued.

1943

PLANNING FOR OVERLORD

Originally the invasion of western Europe was intended to take place in 1943. However, with much of the Allied forces involved in the North African and Italian campaigns, mounting such a massive campaign would have been impossible. By March and April of that year a debate was raging as to whether the landings should occur at Normandy or Calais, with Overlord first being named in April. Normandy was eventually chosen as its beaches were deemed better suited for such an ambitious amphibious landing. By July 1943, a plan was in place.

1945

THE FALL OF BERLIN

On the 16 April 1945 Soviet troops marched into the German capital. During several weeks of street-to-street fighting the Red Army battled the remnants of the German Army and units from the Hitler Youth. Berlin fell on 2 May and on 8 May the Nazis finally surrendered to the Allies – the war in Europe was over.

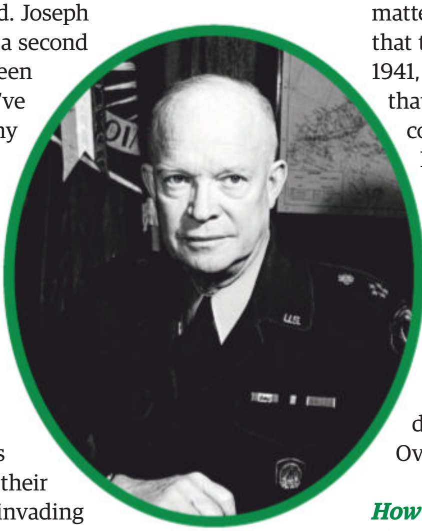
have been a huge setback for the Allied military effort because he was a true alliance commander. He was exceptional at bringing different allies together, something the Nazis never managed to do successfully. If the landings had failed it would also have been a massive blow for Allied morale, whereas German morale would have skyrocketed. Joseph Stalin, who'd been demanding a second front for two years, would've been furious and presumably would've argued that it was the Red Army and the Soviet people fighting the war, not the other Allies. And Winston Churchill, who had always wanted to invade via "the soft underbelly of Europe" (meaning the Mediterranean) might have been in a position to make a strong argument that the Allies should leave France for now. In this scenario, the Allies might have attempted to push their way up through Italy, perhaps invading Greece or the Balkans. So it would've been a dramatic shift and would've necessitated a whole change to Allied strategy. They would not simply have said: 'Right, we'll try again tomorrow.' That would've been impossible.

After a defeat on D-Day, could the Allies have still won the war?

It would've had a dramatic effect regarding short- and perhaps even medium-term strategy, but in terms of the overall trajectory of the war, it was very, very unlikely that even the failure of Operation Overlord could have led to a German victory. By that stage in the war the Nazis were under vast pressure on the Eastern Front. They were being out-produced, economically, in every single sphere that you could possibly mention. They were massively outnumbered. It really was simply a matter of time. Some have made the case that the Nazis lost the war in December 1941, when possibly the finest army that they ever put into the field was completely destroyed in front of Moscow by both the Soviet counter-offensive and the Russian winter. Hitler at the same time declared war on the United States following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. At that point, there was simply no hope of Nazi Germany winning. But even so it's difficult to underestimate just how crushing a defeat it would have been if Operation Overlord had failed.

ABOVE Crowds at Arromanches, Normandy, on the anniversary of D-Day, 6 June 2024

BELOW Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe Dwight D Eisenhower



How crucial is Operation Overlord in the overall story of the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945?

I think its importance is difficult to understate. A successful Overlord, and the loss of France in general, meant that it was only a matter of time before the Allies were going to breach the German border. And so in many ways it was the end. Once those landings were successful the Germans would've needed a miracle to really change what was happening on the battlefield. So yes, it really was of highest importance to the Allies winning the war. ○

THE POSSIBILITY

1943

THE 'SOFT UNDERBELLY OF EUROPE'

The Allies had often disagreed as to where the invasion of Occupied Europe should take place, with Churchill in particular advocating an attack via the Mediterranean, beginning with an amphibious assault on Italy. The Allied invasion of the Italian mainland began in September 1943, with Axis forces finally surrendering in May 1945. Churchill had referred to this area as "the soft underbelly of Europe" but after stiff Nazi resistance US General Mark Clark dubbed Italy "the tough old gut". D-Day's failure may well have seen the Allies forced to strike in the Mediterranean again.

1944

DEATH ON THE BEACHES

Over 4,000 Allied troops were killed during D-Day and nearly 6,000 wounded, while German casualties are estimated between 4,000 and 9,000. Around 425,000 Allied and German troops were killed, wounded or missing in action during the entire Battle of Normandy. Had Operation Overlord failed the Allied casualty list would have been considerably higher.

1945

VE DAY

While it's unlikely that Operation Overlord's failure would've led to a Nazi victory in Europe, it may have resulted in the conflict dragging on for much longer. On 7 May 1945, General Alfred Jodl signed the surrender of all German forces at Reims, France. The following day, a second surrender was signed in Berlin by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, following criticism by Joseph Stalin that Jodl was not a senior commander. An Allied defeat on D-Day would've severely hampered the Soviet assault in the east, leading to prolonged fighting.

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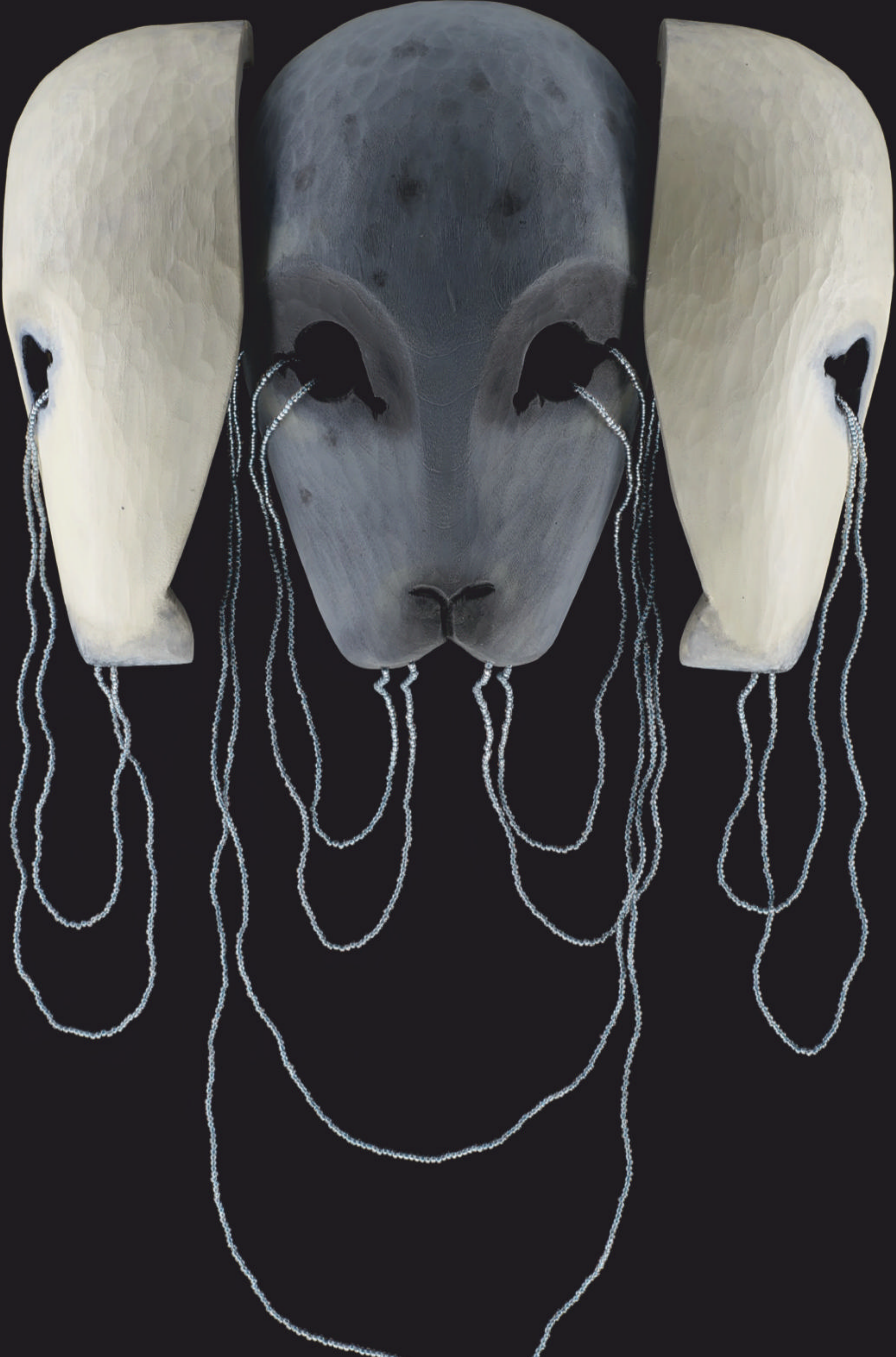


Through History

LIFE IN THE ARCTIC

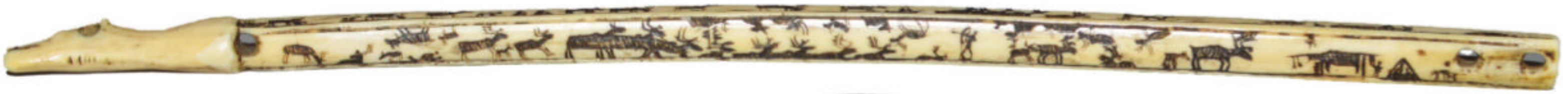
A new British Museum exhibition explores indigenous culture in the icy north

In the challenging and ever-changing Arctic regions of North America, native communities have survived and thrived for centuries. To explore their lives and history, an exciting new British Museum Partnership Exhibition has brought together a number of artefacts and artworks for display at Kirkleatham Museum in Redcar. Organisers say the items will demonstrate to visitors "how these resilient communities live with and adapt to socio-political and environmental changes, and how artistic expression is an important part of daily life".

Exploring themes such as seasonality, human-animal relationships and migration, Arctic Expressions assembles historic and contemporary objects of interest from Alaska and Canada. The exhibition also forms part of the "British Museum in your classroom" programme, with some of the objects being taken to local primary schools.

Rose Taylor, the British Museum's Curator of Americas, says: "These works tell important stories about life in this changing region, conveying the enduring connection between people, their environments and the animals they share them with."

Arctic Expressions promises to be an exciting look into the history and culture of over 400,000 indigenous peoples living in the Circumpolar North and their spiritual relationship with their environment.



DECORATED DRILL

▲ This bow drill, used for making holes and starting fires, dates from around 1860 and is attributed to the Iñupiaq peoples of Alaska. Made from walrus ivory, it's decorated with scenes of caribou herding and hunting, walrus hunting and whaling.

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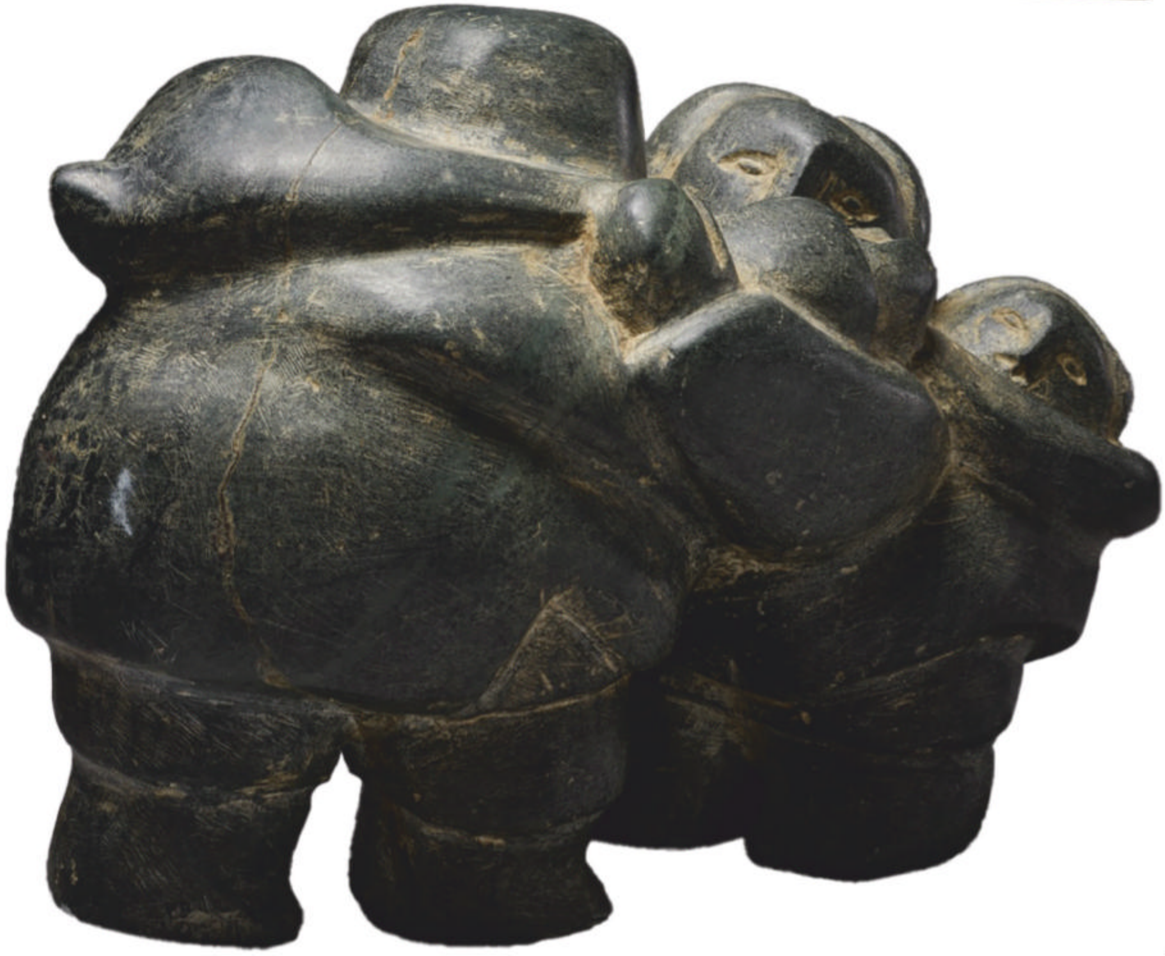

CLOSE BONDS

▶ *Family Reuniting*, a soapstone sculpture carved by Nunavut artist Paul Toolooktook in the early 1990s, showcases the minimalist yet impactful Nunavut style.

© The Trustees of the British Museum
© Paul Toolooktook

GROWING UP

◀ *Shedding Natchiayaaq from Kigiktaq*, made by Erin Ggaadimits Ivalu Gingrich in 2024, highlights the importance of the seal to the Inuit peoples. It represents the seal's journey from pup to adult as its skin changes from the colour of snow to that of water and ice.

© The Trustees of the British Museum
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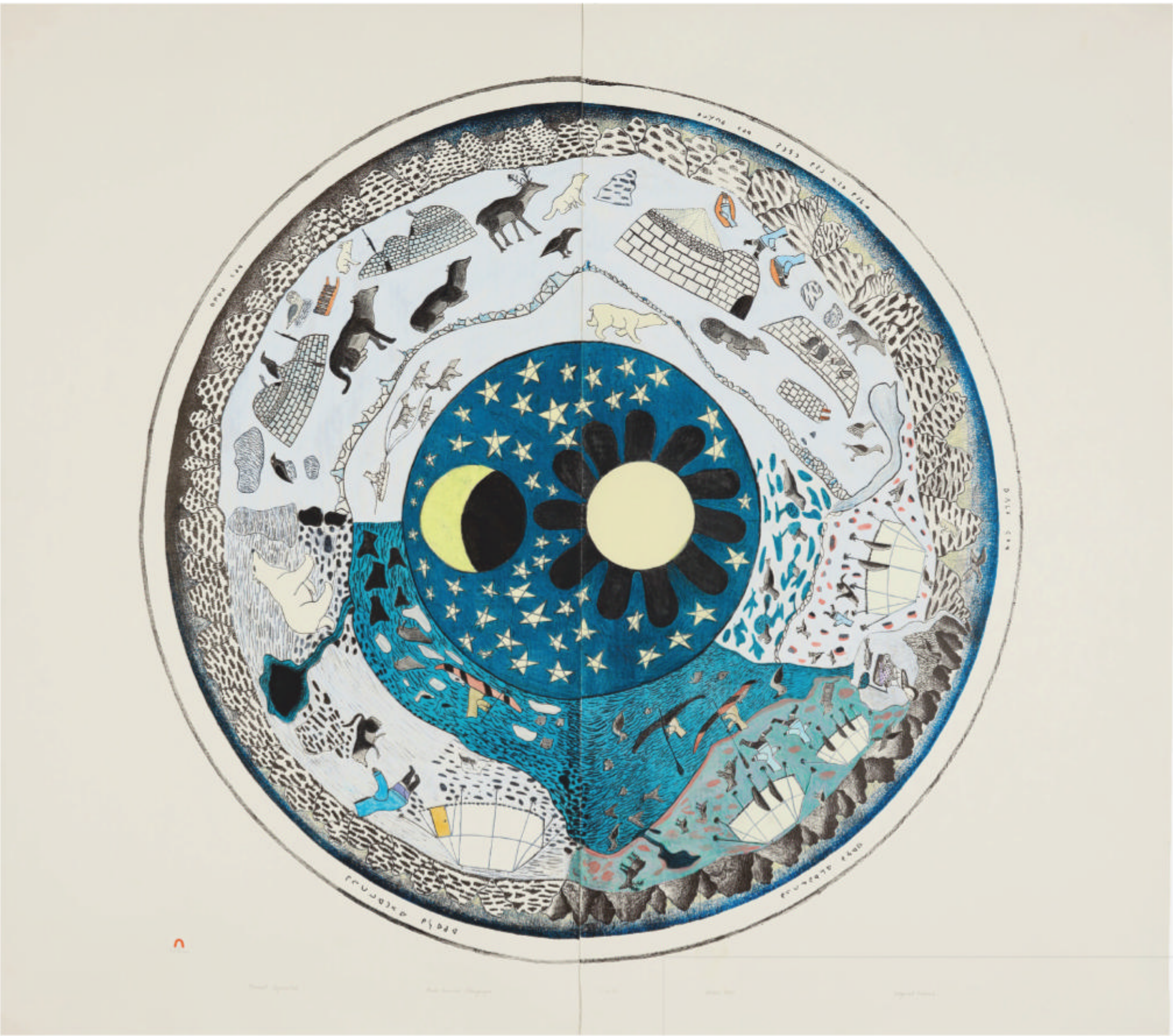
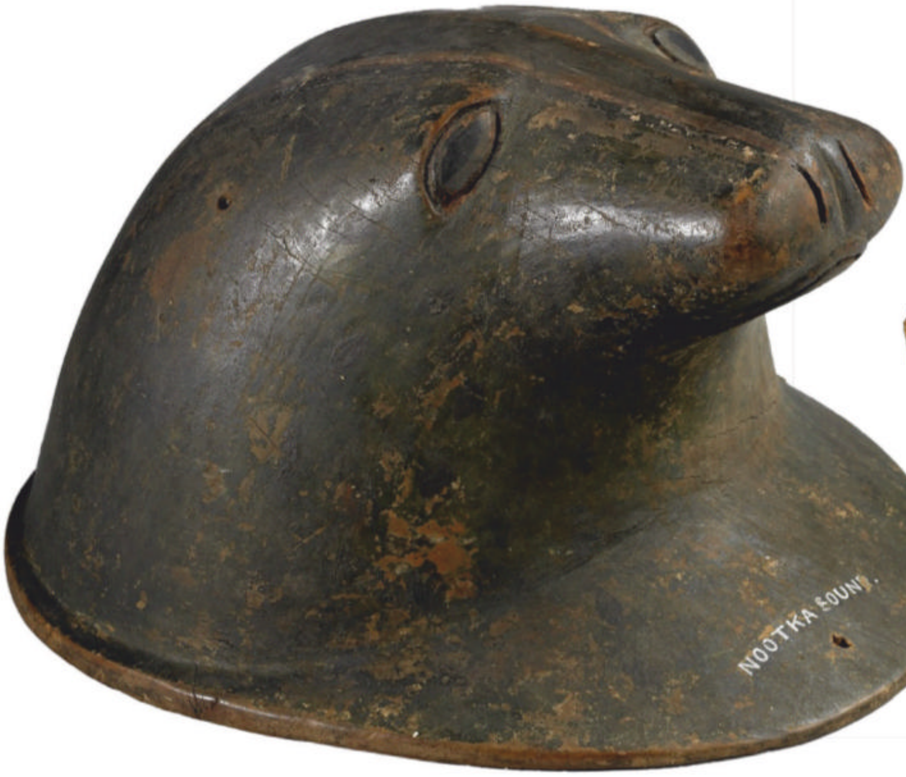


SEASONAL SIGNS

◀ Hand-drawn by acclaimed Inuit artist Kenojuak Ashevak, this 1992 lithograph represents the six seasons of the Inuit calendar. Its intricate illustrations show how Inuit transport, clothing and housing change with the seasons, highlighting the community's close relationship with the climate.

© The Trustees of the British Museum
© Kenojuak Ashevak



DECOY DISGUISE

◀ Acquired during Captain Cook's final voyage to North America (1776-80), this helmet is made from wood and allowed the wearer to hunt seals without being spotted by the animals. It was created by the Northwest Coast Peoples of Alaska.

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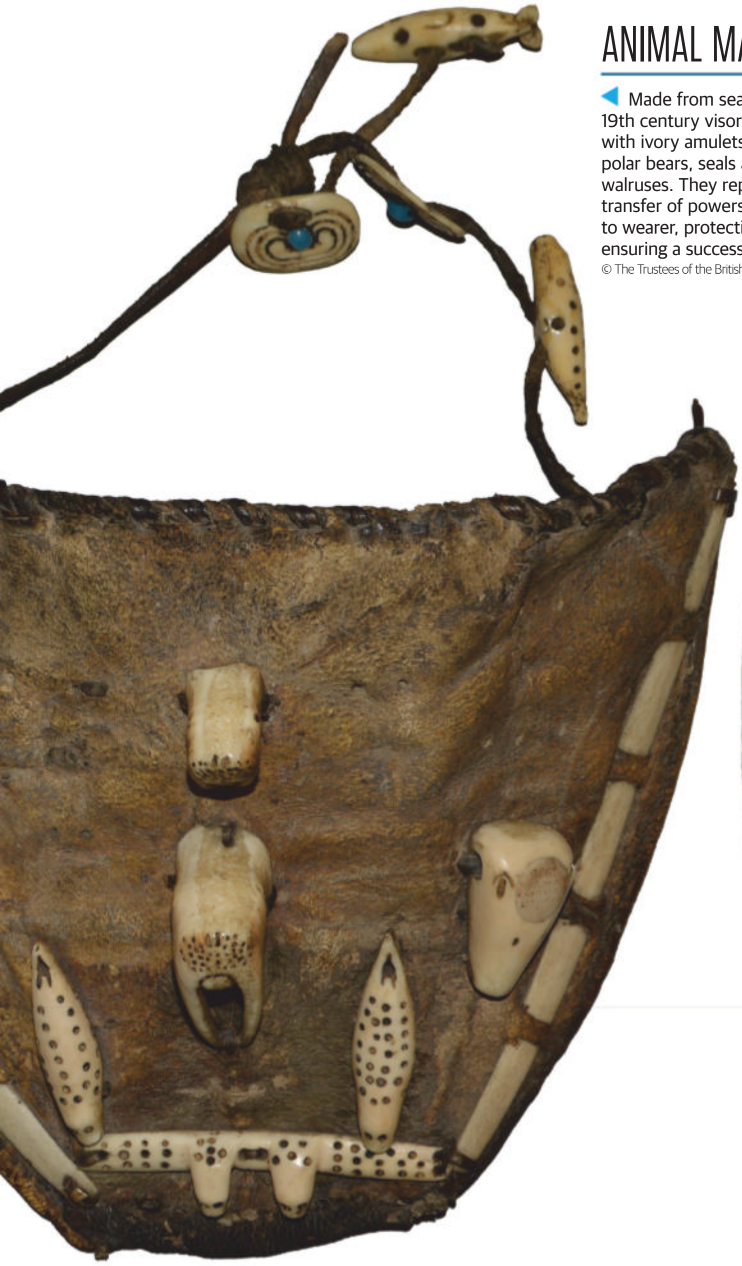

ANIMAL MAGIC

Made from seal skin, this 19th century visor is decorated with ivory amulets of whales, polar bears, seals and walruses. They represent the transfer of powers from animal to wearer, protecting them and ensuring a successful hunt.

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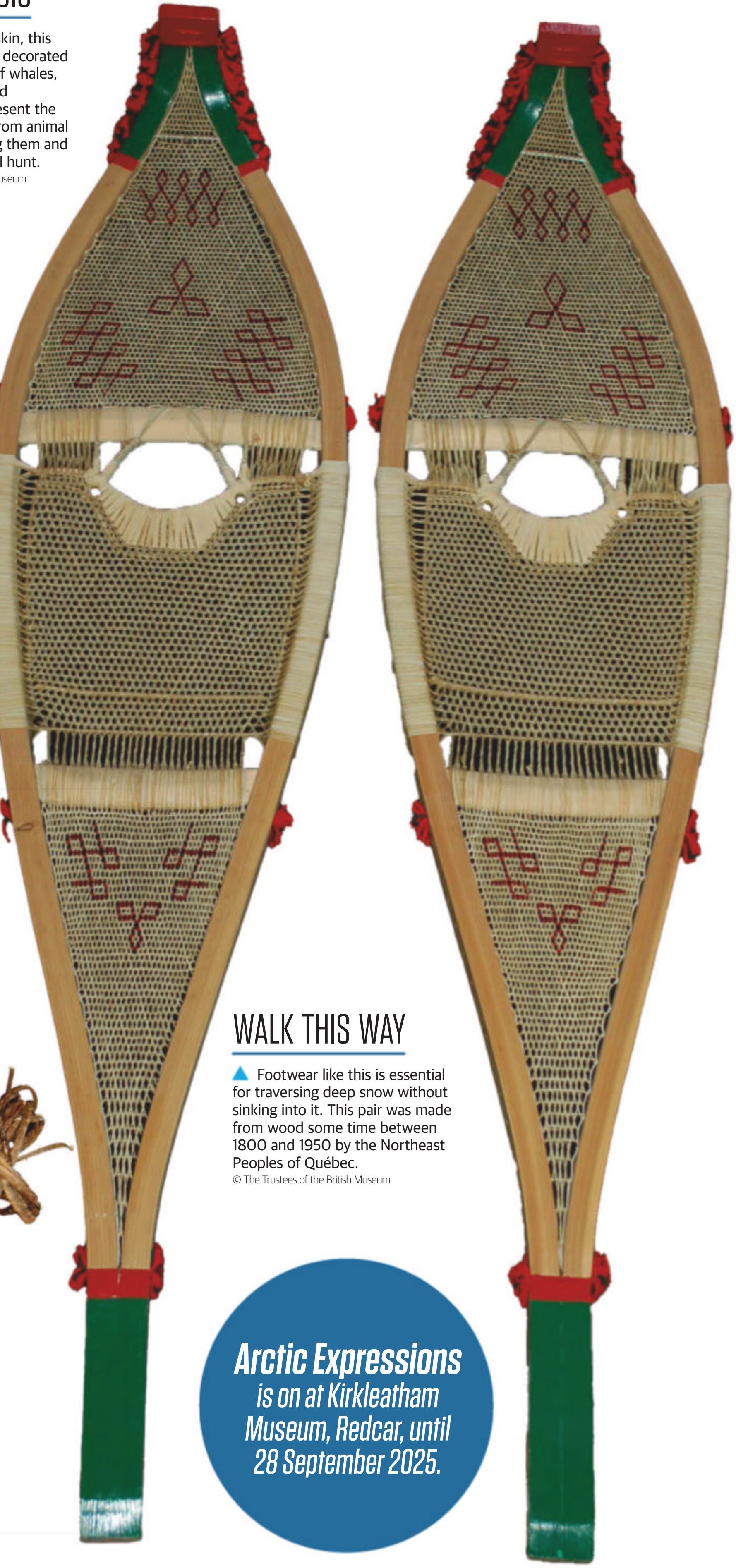

WALK THIS WAY

Footwear like this is essential for traversing deep snow without sinking into it. This pair was made from wood some time between 1800 and 1950 by the Northeast Peoples of Québec.

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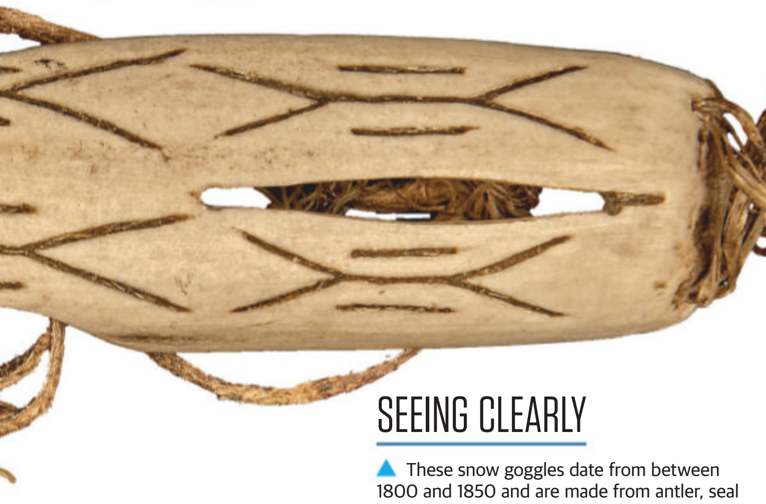


SEEING CLEARLY

These snow goggles date from between 1800 and 1850 and are made from antler, seal skin and sinew. The clever design protects the wearer's eyes from the glare of sunlight and moonlight reflecting off the snow.

© The Trustees of the British Museum

Arctic Expressions *is on at Kirkleatham Museum, Redcar, until 28 September 2025.*

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

© BBC/Tannadice Pictures

THE GOLD: SERIES 2

The fallout of one of the largest robberies in British history continues in this thrilling drama

Creator: Neil Forsyth **Distributor:** BBC iPlayer **Cast:** Hugh Bonneville, Emun Elliott, Charlotte Spencer **Released:** Out now

Broadcast in 2023, series one of *The Gold* told the story of the 1983 Brink's-Mat robbery in which thieves made away with 6,800 bars of gold worth £26 million – over £100 million today. Series one was incredibly popular, drawing 8.7 million viewers for its first episode alone and receiving critical acclaim. It ended with Hugh Bonneville's DCS Brian Boyce and his team discovering that half the stolen loot was still unaccounted for. So viewers were left with an obvious question: what happened to the other half?

As with the first series, this is a mixture of fact and fiction. Some characters, such as Tom Cullen's John Palmer (returning from season one) are real-life figures, whereas others are fictional composites, such as Tom Hughes' Logan Campbell. Creator Neil Forsyth has clearly sifted through the countless rumours and theories relating to what happened to the missing gold in an attempt to create a drama that can at least lay claim to being partially true.

Despite this, occasionally the series delves slightly into silliness. For example, in episode two, British branded beer and a few barely hidden newspapers reporting the robbery help a detective locate a criminal in Tenerife. Admittedly, this sequence feels slightly ludicrous, but given it features the real-life policeman Tony Lundy (played by Stephen Campbell Moore) it's possible it may have a basis in reality. Fact is often stranger than fiction. Either way, the style of the series, in many ways harkening back to classic crime dramas, ensures that the odd moment of invention is not entirely out of place.

Whereas directorial duties on the first series were split between Aneil Karia and Lawrence Gough, Patrick Harkins takes over for season two. The show looks phenomenal. Sequences set in Tenerife have a hazy sun-soaked atmosphere, while those on the Caribbean island of Tortola pop with colour. Conversely, the rainy Isle of Man and the filthy streets of London have a washed out, greyish tone to them.

As the above locations suggest, this is a much broader and wider story than the first series. At times this can be confusing as it continuously introduces new characters, new settings and new storylines. One of the ways the show attempts to alleviate this is to have characters stop every now and then and speak very directly about what's happening. This includes the occasional pontification (largely from Hugh Bonneville) which may feel out of place but assist in adding thematic depth.

It's these themes that help set the series apart. While the crime elements are handled deftly and the show is certainly thrilling, Forsyth also sprinkles in interesting discussions about the divide between the upper echelons of the criminal world and the street-level crooks. It's not perfect by any means, but *The Gold* series two proudly follows in the footsteps of its excellent predecessor. ***CM***

★★★★☆

BELIEVABLE LIES: THE MISFITS WHO FOUGHT CHURCHILL'S SECRET PROPAGANDA WAR

How fake news, fibs and subterfuge helped win WWII

Author: Terry Stiastny **Publisher:** W H Allen
Price: £22 **Released:** Out now

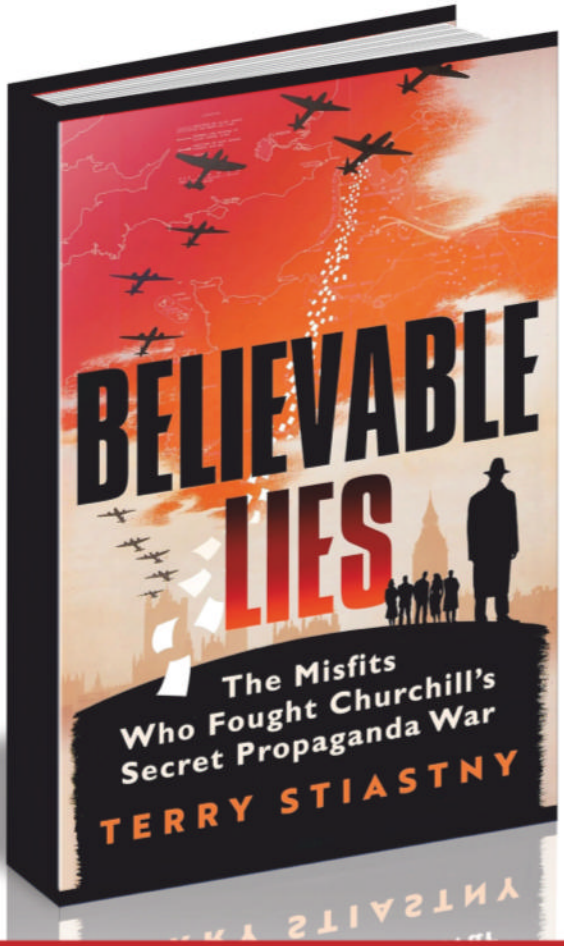
From the earliest days of the Second World War, Winston Churchill argued that defeating Nazi Germany would require more than just courage and steadfastness. Guile, deception and dirty tricks would be essential as well. To that end, alongside the better-known Special Operations Executive, the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) was established. And, as this new book by former BBC journalist Terry Stiastny reveals, it went on to play a - quite literally - beguiling role.

This PWE waged psychological warfare against Germany and its allies with both white and black propaganda. The former being the truth that Hitler's regime hid from its own people, while the latter involved drip-feeding fake news into Nazi-occupied Europe. The two shared the same aim: to undermine morale and spread confusion.

Headquartered at Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire, the PWE was staffed by an eccentric mix of journalists, politicians, intelligence officers, authors, advertisers, artists and forgers. Among them were the likes of Canadian newspaper magnate Sir Campbell Stuart and the celebrated actor and playwright Noël Coward. The whole thing was headed up by famed author and spy Robert Bruce Lockhart - a man whose outrageous life is thought to have been a key inspiration for James Bond.

Believable Lies brings this world to life with engaging clarity, examining not just the cunning tactics, methods and technologies these characters employed but also the ethical lines they crossed. A cracking read. ***NS***

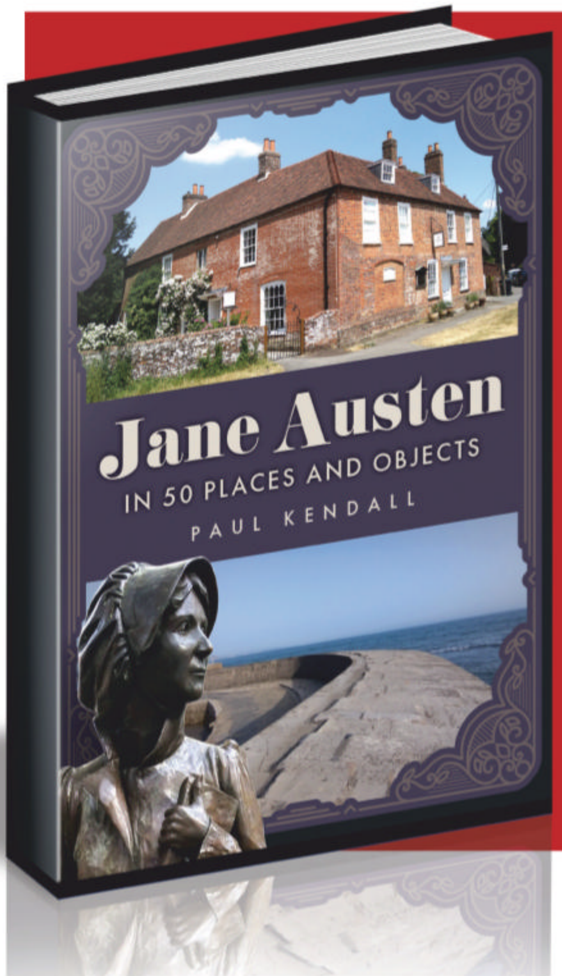
★★★★★



JANE AUSTEN IN 50 PLACES AND OBJECTS

A whistle-stop tour of the author's world

Author: Paul Kendall **Publisher:** Amberley **Price:** £15.99 **Released:** Out now



Coming in at just under 100 pages, *Jane Austen in 50 Places and Objects* by Paul Kendall is the perfect slim size to pop in your bag when you hit the road in search of the writer. In fact, that's probably the best thing you could do with this book. It picks out the locations and items that meant something special to one of the history's most celebrated authors, who remains hugely popular all over the world.

Kendall's book is not intended as an exhaustive biography but as a celebration of and introduction to her life and the things that inspired her. It's presented chronologically, from her earliest years to the end of her life and beyond, and celebrates everything from her writing desk to her favourite haunts, homes and the place where she was laid to rest. Each location is presented with map co-ordinates, a brief chapter on Austen's connection to the place and colour photographs.

Much of the information contained in this volume will most likely be familiar to diehard Austenites, but for those new to the author or with a casual interest in her life and work it will serve as a handy reference, especially if it's accompanying them on a day trip to Bath or one of the other locations listed herein. It is readable, instantly accessible and, though undeniably brief, packed with interesting snippets that vividly illustrate the world in which Austen lived and worked. ***CC***

★★★★☆

BRITAIN'S HOME FRONT
Out now!

Britain's Home Front

In September 1939, Britain was once again plunged into a deadly struggle with Germany and her allies. As the troops prepared to confront the Wehrmacht, at home the British people faced a different kind of struggle, one that would require everyone to do their part. This is the story of a people who strived to keep calm and carry on.

Buy *Britain's Home Front* in shops or online at **magazinesdirect.com Price:** £14.99

HISTORY of WAR RECOMMENDS…

VICTORIA TAYLOR
EAGLE DAYS
Out now!

Eagle Days

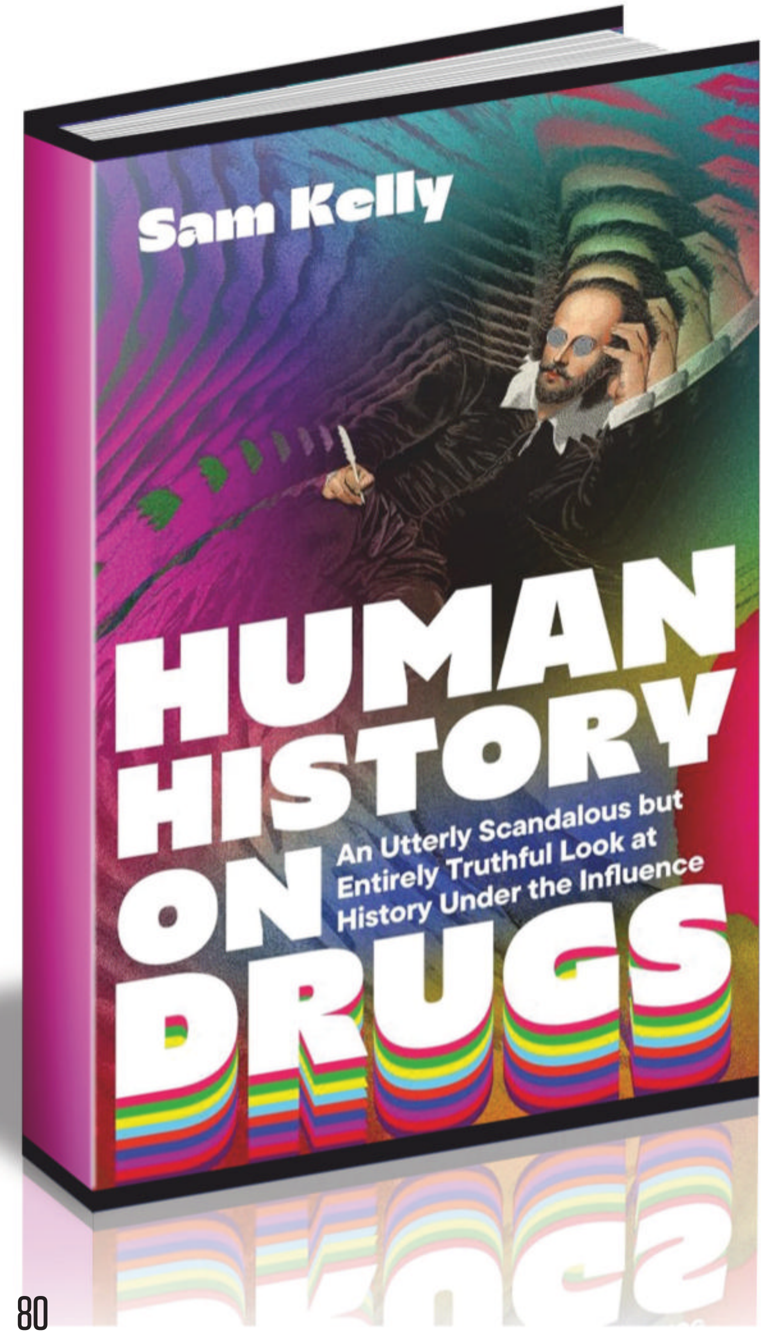
Author Victoria Taylor **Price** £25 **Publisher** Head of Zeus

What's exciting about Taylor's *Eagle Days* is its freshness within the sprawling Battle of Britain genre; before now, no author has critically examined what it was like for 'the other side'. In doing so, the author draws on primary sources in Germany and elsewhere, as well as delving into contemporary newspaper articles and material pumped out by the Reich's Propagandakompanie war reporters.

HUMAN HISTORY ON DRUGS

A lively myth-busting book that will inspire Gen Z

Authors: Sam Kelly **Publisher:** Icon **Price:** £25 **Released:** 17 July2025


Sam Kelly
HUMAN HISTORY ON DRUGS
An Utterly Scandalous but Entirely Truthful Look at History Under the Influence

Sam Kelly's new release is an exciting, broad look at the role drugs have played in our collective history. Narcotics are something that are largely associated with modern history, and when asked to think about the topic most of us would conjure up images of Victorian opium dens or the drugs that fuelled millions of troops in the Second World War. Movie buffs might start thinking about the glamourised drug-taking of stockbrokers made infamous by the 2013 movie *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

Kelly tackles these misconceptions head on, diving into drugs under Ramesses in ancient Egypt, Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi's use of mercury, right up to Apple co-founder Steve Jobs' experimentations with LSD. Working across such a broad arc of history can make it difficult to capture the various moods and attitudes in different areas and eras, but Kelly should be applauded for exploring these attitudes while not glamourising modern drug-taking.

Kelly has made a contentious, intense and difficult topic into a readable, humorous and accessible book. This is one of the major strengths of *Human History on Drugs* – some of the topics covered are quite dark, such as the abuse that Judy Garland suffered during her career and Adolf Hitler's drug intake during the Second World War. Our understanding of some of history's most loved characters like Queen Victoria, John F Kennedy and William Shakespeare is also challenged. This is important, as it shows Kelly achieving his aim to showcase history and its characters with depth, as complex three-dimensional entities.

However, this accessibility is primarily geared towards a young, mainly Gen Z audience, and some of the language, phrases and words, while commonly understood by Kelly's target audience, can at times be a bit crass and uncomfortable for readers of a more mature vintage. Yet this does not take away from the fantastic work of scholarship that Kelly has produced. He has clearly drawn from a vast number of primary sources and he explores the subject from interesting new angles.

Our favourite part of *Human History on Drugs* is the story of Pope Leo XIII. Typically, popes are supposed to be morally incorruptible individuals steering the Church and its flock through the guidance of God. While there have been many popes who have strayed from this path, we certainly don't associate drug-taking with the Papacy! The book details how forward-thinking, important and hard-working Leo XIII was and how that helped to develop Catholic Church in the modern world, but Kelly also reveals much of this was fuelled by the use of cocaine-laced wine. While this was a legal product used by many people in that era, it's incredible to have the veil lifted on the notoriously secretive world of the popes. ***JvU***

★★★☆☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

NAPOLEON

Director: Ridley Scott **Starring:** Joaquin Phoenix, Vanessa Kirby, Tahar Rahim **Country:** France **Year:** 2023

Can one of cinema's great directors wrestle this sweeping tale into submission where others failed?

D

VERDICT: Picks the legend over the facts more often than not.

01 The film opens with the execution of Marie Antoinette in 1793, which Captain Napoleon Bonaparte (Phoenix) is present to witness. In reality, Napoleon was busy dealing with the Siege of Toulon, the event from which he began to rise up the ranks.

02 Having successfully handled Toulon, Napoleon is entrusted with the French campaign in Egypt. The timeline for this is correct, but the Battle of the Pyramids did not see Napoleon fire on the monuments as the film shows. The battle was 11km away.

03 The volatile marriage of Napoleon and Josephine (Kirby) comes to an end with a divorce ceremony after they're unable to conceive an heir together. This event is real, but Napoleon slapping Josephine during it has been debunked by historians.

04 We witness Napoleon's victory at the Battle of Austerlitz, culminating in Austrian and Russian troops drowning under a frozen lake as cannonfire breaks the ice beneath them. No such lake exists, only small ponds, in which only a handful of people drowned.

05 Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington (Rupert Everett) meet on HMS Bellerophon before the French leader is exiled to St Helena. There is no historical record of such a meeting taking place or, in fact, any meeting between the two military leaders at any time.

All images: © Alamy

Did you know?
The croque madame emerged in the 1960s, adding a fried egg that resembles a popular hat design from that era.

CROQUE MONSIEUR

CLASSIC TOASTED SANDWICH, PARIS, LATE-19TH CENTURY – PRESENT

The croque monsieur is one of French cuisine's most famous exports and one of its easiest recipes – a simple toasted cheese and ham sandwich that has been adapted and riffed upon for decades. There is some debate about when it was first conceived, with the most common story placing its invention around 1910 in a cafe run by Michel Lunarca. He's said to have named it 'crunchy mister' to make fun of accusations that he was using human meat in his sandwiches. The ghoulish gag did nothing to harm sales.

However there is some evidence that the sandwich predates this story, although the origins may still be similar. A croque monsieur is mentioned in an 1891 issue of the magazine *La Revue Athletique,* which featured a story about this type of sandwich being made during a fishing trip in the Norfolk Broads in England. The use of toasted bread, ham and Gruyere cheese, along with the famous name, are all present in the tale.

Ingredients

- 150ml whole milk
- 1 bay leaf (optional)
- Half an onion (optional)
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp flour
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)
- Salt and pepper
- 4 slices of white bread with a soft crust
- Dijon mustard
- 4 thick slices of ham
- 100g grated/shredded Gruyére, Comté or Emmental cheese

All images: © Getty Images

METHOD

01 We start by making a Béchamel sauce. Warm the milk, just short of boiling, adding the onion and bay leaf if you're using those. In a pan, melt the butter and then whisk in the flour.

02 Remove the onion and bay leaf (if using) and gradually add the warm milk until everything combines into a smooth, thick sauce.

03 Add the nutmeg and optional cayenne for extra spice. Season with salt and pepper. Take off the heat and set aside.

04 Lightly toast the bread in a toaster or an oven at 200°C (390°F, gas mark 6). Spread Dijon mustard on one slice and then add the ham and cheese to the opposite slice. Combine the slices together to form your sandwich.

05 Spread two tablespoons of the Béchamel sauce on top of each sandwich. You can add a little more cheese on top too if you want.

06 Place the sandwich, sauce-side up, back in the oven until the cheese melts. Then transfer to a grill/broiler until the sauce begins to brown.

07 Cut in half and serve.

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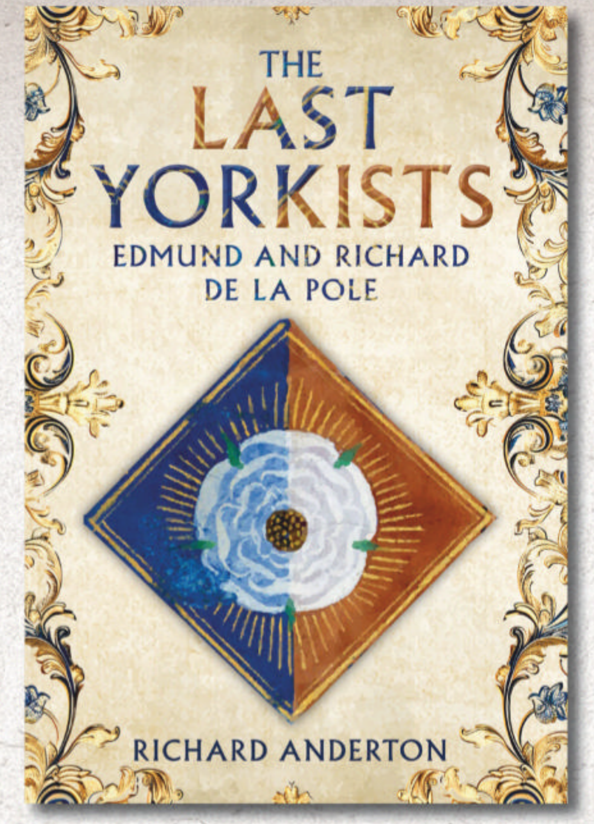
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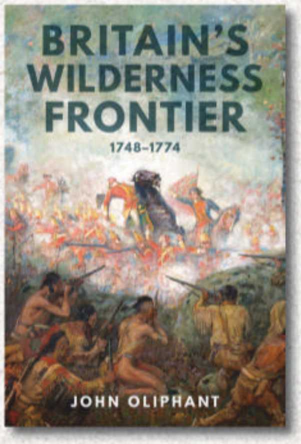
Through the lens of the influential de la Pole brothers, this book offers readers a chance to explore some of the lesser known aspects of Henry VII and Henry VIII's rule, in particular their foreign wars and often duplicitous dealings with other European monarchs.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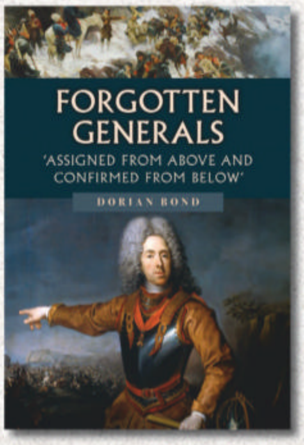
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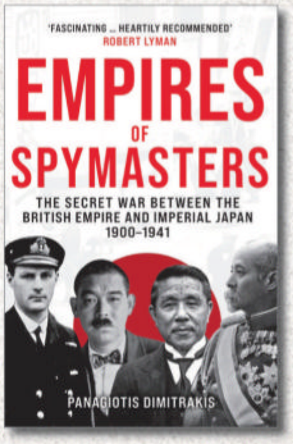
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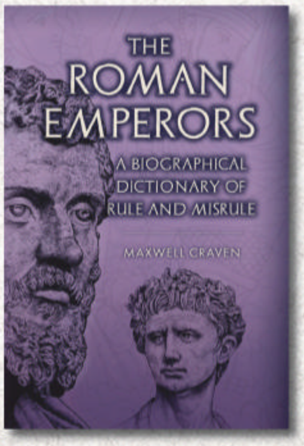
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